Athena SWAN Silver department award application

Name of university: University College London

Department: Cancer Institute

Date of application: April 2014

Date of university Bronze and/or Silver Athena SWAN award: Bronze award received 2006, renewed 2009, 2012

Contact for application: Professor Kerry Chester

Email: k.chester@ucl.ac.uk

Telephone: +4420 7679 0700

Departmental website address: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/cancer

Athena SWAN Silver Department awards recognise that in addition to university-wide policies the department is working to promote gender equality and to address challenges particular to the discipline.

Not all institutions use the term ‘department’ and there are many equivalent academic groupings with different names, sizes and compositions. The definition of a ‘department’ for SWAN purposes can be found on the Athena SWAN website. If in doubt, contact the Athena SWAN Officer well in advance to check eligibility.

It is essential that the contact person for the application is based in the department.

Sections to be included

At the end of each section state the number of words used. Click here for additional guidance on completing the template.
1. **Letter of endorsement from the head of department: maximum 500 word**

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.
Re: Athena SWAN application for Silver Award: Letter of Endorsement

Dear Ms Dickinson,

As acting director of UCL Cancer Institute (CI), I am proud to endorse our application for an Athena SWAN Silver Award. As a father sharing caring responsibilities for two young children, I am delighted to see gender equality awareness growing in our institution. A personal driver is my 12 year old daughter who is already showing an interest in science. It is simply unthinkable for me that she should grow up in a world where anything other than her talent and its application would limit her success. This spurs me into getting it right for women at the CI and I commend our SAT for applying themselves so enthusiastically to the job in hand.

Created in 2007, we are a growing institution with approximately 200 academic/research staff. We have maintained an overall 50% gender balance from the start but have fewer women at senior grades; the greatest difference being at professorial level with only 20% women. We have started to tackle this unacceptable situation with a range of short-term and longer-term initiatives. I would like to highlight a few.

I believe that mentoring is an invaluable component of career support and, soon after I joined the CI, I implemented a mentoring programme for scientific group leaders. I am very pleased to say that, following a need identified during our staff survey, we are now able to offer every female scientist a 1:1 mentor. Role models are likewise important and I have particularly enjoyed our Inspirational Women programme where women who have reached the pinnacle of their professions share experience on how to successfully navigate career challenges. These sessions have certainly been
inspiring but, more importantly in my opinion, have been the conversations in corridors, coffee rooms, offices and labs that have taken place in their wake.

As an immediate approach to recruit more women to senior positions we employed head-hunters with a brief to include a good proportion of women candidates on their short-list. We also set out to identify and encourage internal female candidates. Taking these approaches, we have already appointed a female Head of Pathology. As a longer-term measure, we are modifying our appraisal system to raise awareness of promotion issues and we are implementing an interactive internal promotions review panel that will help candidates identify shortcomings and improve their applications. We are also providing women-focussed careers advice days.

I am particularly encouraged to see our researchers going into schools in underprivileged areas, stimulating students’ desire to learn and giving them the confidence and ambition to think about a career in science. This initiative, driven by our young female scientists, is growing to become a leadership exercise in itself.

It is exciting to play a part in directing the changes brought about because of our participation in Athena SWAN. I strongly support the CI application for an Athena SWAN Silver award and I am wholly committed to support this initiative and its implementation.

Yours sincerely

Tariq Enver
Director – UCL Cancer Institute

(496 words)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEOLO</td>
<td>Departmental Equal Opportunity Liaison Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCIC</td>
<td>Comprehensive Cancer Imaging Centre</td>
</tr>
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<td>CI</td>
<td>UCL Cancer Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIRPS</td>
<td>CI Research-in Progress Seminars</td>
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<td>ECMC</td>
<td>Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMS</td>
<td>Group Mentoring Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>GT&amp;RC</td>
<td>Graduate Teaching and Research Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HoD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEFCE</td>
<td>Higher Education Funding Council for England</td>
</tr>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIHR</td>
<td>National Institute for Health Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Principal Investigator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGT</td>
<td>Postgraduate Taught</td>
</tr>
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<td>PGR</td>
<td>Postgraduate Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POGB</td>
<td>Paul O’Gorman Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R &amp; D</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAN</td>
<td>Scientific Women’s Academic Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSCC</td>
<td>Student-Staff Consultative Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEMM</td>
<td>Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCLH</td>
<td>University College London Hospitals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. The self-assessment process: maximum 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

The SAT includes scientists and clinicians representing all levels of CI academia. Our meetings are lively, enjoyable and well attended. There are 18 members (12 women, 6 men) with diverse backgrounds and expertise (Table 1). We made a decision to have a large SAT to represent the size and diversity of the CI, in addition to believing in the principle that “many hands make light work”. The majority have hands-on experience of combining career with family caring commitments.

Table 1. Profile of the SAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Academic position</th>
<th>Current major SAT role</th>
<th>Experience of work/life balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clare Bennett</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>Data analysis and presentation</td>
<td>Has two sons under 5 and works 4 days a week. Clare has just returned from maternity leave, so her experiences and feedback have been invaluable to the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonia Buckingham</td>
<td>Health and Safety Advisor and DEOLO</td>
<td>Ensures that all new staff and students are informed of the CI commitment to Athena SWAN</td>
<td>Has two school age children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry Chester</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Established and chairs the SAT and is an Athena SWAN mentor</td>
<td>Developed career whilst bringing up her daughter, now 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizta Deltcheva</td>
<td>PhD Student</td>
<td>Co-organisation of the Postgraduate Society and the 2014 ‘SWAN Week’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tariq Enver</td>
<td>Professor and Interim CI Director</td>
<td>Ensuring that SAT decisions and policies are executed</td>
<td>Shares caring responsibilities for two young children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adele Fielding</td>
<td>Reader and Consultant Haematologist</td>
<td>Tweets via the CI Athena SWAN account on issues concerning women in STEMM</td>
<td>Cares for a 14 year old son and elderly parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemary Gale</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Developing surveys and the Action Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan Hackshaw</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Oversees the data analyses and is an Athena SWAN mentor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzana Hadjur</td>
<td>Junior Group Leader</td>
<td>The ‘Inspiring Excellence’ seminar series and an Athena SWAN mentor</td>
<td>Began independent lab at the same time as beginning her family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anja Hafemann</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>Co-organisation of the Postgraduate Society and the 2014 ‘SWAN Week’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Heggie</td>
<td>Interim CI Manager</td>
<td>Project management and data collection/analysis</td>
<td>Shares parenting responsibilities for his teenage son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Olszewski</td>
<td>Principal Teaching Fellow who leads the CI Educational remit</td>
<td>Academic Careers Day and a mentor for staff and students</td>
<td>Has two school-age children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Linch</td>
<td>Professor and HoD of Haematology</td>
<td>Strategic advice, designing and analysing the staff surveys and mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Payne</td>
<td>Senior Research and Consultant Haematologist</td>
<td>Established the CI focus group for parents and carers, organised the website and is an Athena SWAN mentor</td>
<td>Has two young daughters and is currently on maternity leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuela Rossini</td>
<td>CI Staffing Manager</td>
<td>Supports data analysis and collection</td>
<td>Has primary care of two daughters aged 10 and 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paolo Salomoni</td>
<td>Professorial Research Associate</td>
<td>Co-leads the CI Athena SWAN mentoring scheme</td>
<td>Recently returned from four weeks paternity leave and supports elderly father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Sutton-Mattocks</td>
<td>Chairman of the CI Research Trust Charity</td>
<td>Previously a partner in a City law firm - brings a view from outside academia and benefit of his legal background</td>
<td>Primary carer for his school-age son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Thirlwell</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer and Consultant Oncologist</td>
<td>Interacts with the commercial sector and co-leads the CI mentoring scheme</td>
<td>Cares for dependent father</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Action

The SAT was established in July 2012 and meets monthly to assess all aspects concerning improvement of women's careers within the CI. We started by: (i) collecting HR data, (ii) attending Athena SWAN information events, (iii) talking to other SAT teams, (iv) planning the web-site, (v) investigating mentoring schemes and (vi) designing staff surveys, which we subsequently implemented in January 2013 and July 2013. We also decided to launch a focused Athena 'SWAN' information week to introduce the SAT and promote awareness; this took place February 2013 and is now an annual event. Feedback from surveys and 'SWAN' week (section 5) guided us to initiate:

- Academic Careers workshops (page 20)
- A bespoke mentoring scheme (page 19)
- A series of presentations by high profile Inspirational Women (page 21)
- A Lactation suite (page 32)
- A dedicated Athena SWAN website with a One-Stop-Shop for information (page 19)
- Outreach programmes (page 29)
We also consulted with the private sector and secured Laura King, Global Head of HR for international law firm Clifford Chance, as an external advisor to the SAT. Laura explained that, in their experience, there was a strong self-perpetuating factor in the lack of women in leadership roles. Talented women saw that the likelihood of reaching influential positions was not in their favour. The commercial sector was therefore working to increase the number of women in the board room, a sentiment emphasised by our Inspirational Speaker Helena Morrissey (page 21), founder of 'The 30% Club', an initiative to increase female representation in Britain’s boardrooms. As an immediate response, the SAT consulted with the Institute Director who restructured the Executive Board to comprise 50% women (page 25).

The SAT also takes responsibility for the CI Athena SWAN website that is continuously updated with news and links to relevant policies and events. We have accumulated a repository of images of our CI women scientists; these are profiled on the website and available for use in the general CI website and newsletters.

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.

From April 2014 the SAT will meet every 2 months, with responsibility for: organisation of events that raise the Athena SWAN profile, staff surveys and focus groups, expanding the mentoring scheme and overseeing the promotion process. The SAT will also strictly monitor progress on implementation of the action plan and continue to set future milestones and goals. Individuals responsible for action plan deliverables will report to the SAT. If deliverables are off-track, the SAT will discuss any problems and, if appropriate, allocate more resources to the responsible individual. CI Staff data will be reviewed annually, split by gender. A quarterly report of progress, and an annual report on staff data, will be presented at the CI Executive Board and published as news on the CI Athena SWAN website.

(961 words)

3. A picture of the department: maximum 2000 words

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

The CI was established in 2007 and is part of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, within the School of Life and Medical Sciences. The School comprises the largest concentration of biomedical researchers in Europe and UCL is consistently ranked within the top 20 global universities. The CI hosts the majority of cancer research at UCL. The overall remit of the CI is to develop a cancer presence and centre of excellence that rivals other major national and international hubs for cancer research.

The CI is structured as five Departments (Oncology, Haematology, Pathology, Cancer Biology and the Cancer Research UK & UCL Cancer Trials Centre). The main Institute is situated in the Paul O’Gorman Building, Huntley Street, with staff also located in the nearby Rockefeller Building, Cheries Mews, Shropshire House, the Cancer Research UK & UCL Cancer Trials Centre at 90 Tottenham Court Road, and at the Royal Free Campus in Hampstead. There are currently a total of 445 staff members, 198 of them academic/research staff, with 50 scientific group leaders, 32 clinical scientists, and 50 honorary clinical consultants. Of the current group leaders affiliated with cancer, there are 4 Fellows of the Royal Society and 10 Fellows of the Academy of Medical Sciences. Particular areas of strength include stem cell biology, transcription factors, the cell cycle, translational
immunology, genomics and bioinformatics, mechanisms of chromatin regulation, gene and immunotherapy, viral oncology, drug development and clinical trials.

The CI is managed by an Executive Board, which includes the CI Director, the Deputy Director, heads of research departments, heads of key scientific initiatives, the Athena SWAN lead and junior group leaders. The committee has recently been restructured and now has a gender balance of 50% women, ensuring female representation at the highest decision-making level.

The CI does not run undergraduate programmes although we contribute a significant amount of teaching to training medical undergraduate students who are enrolled within the Division of Medicine. Our staff are actively involved in postgraduate education, which is a key component of our strategy. CI clinical academics are also active as physicians in partner hospitals, leading programmes of national and international standing that specialise in a variety of different tumours. The CI is affiliated with a number of teaching and specialist hospitals in central London, including University College London Hospitals (UCLH), the Royal Free Hospital, and Great Ormond Street Hospital. The CI is also the nucleus for the UCL Cancer Research UK Centre, the Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre (ECMC) and (joint with Kings College London) the Comprehensive Cancer Imaging Centre (CCIC). The Institute hosts over 100 postgraduate students (~70% research and 30% taught) and currently runs one Masters programme (MSc Cancer) with a second programme, MSc Clinical Cell & Tissue Engineering (CCTE), due to begin in September 2014.

b) 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) **Numbers of males and females on access or foundation courses** – comment on the data and describe any initiatives taken to attract women to the courses.

The CI does not provide access or foundation courses.

(ii) **Undergraduate male and female numbers** – 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.

The CI does not run undergraduate courses.

(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.

The CI presently has one postgraduate taught (PGT) programme, MSc Cancer. The course is full-time and has been running since 2009. It attracts more women than men (61%), which
is consistent with the national trend in life and health science-related PGT programmes (HESA 2012/13, 75% female). Only one student (female in 2012/2013) has not completed the course. We pride ourselves on the mentoring and academic support that we offer our taught programme students, which we believe contributes to this high completion rate. This includes a full-time graduate tutor within the Institute, a personal tutoring scheme for students and optional ‘top up’ sessions for those who struggle with writing (e.g. grammar, academic writing). We will continue to monitor student completion rates, and any gender-related difference, should it arise.

(iv) **Postgraduate 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 CI offers three types of postgraduate research (PGR) degree training: MD (Res), MPhil/PhD, and MBPhD. Overall, we have a female: male ratio of approximately 3:2 on these programmes (Figure 2A). As a percentage (range of 60%-71% for the past three years), this is at or above the national average of 60% women (HESA 2012/13) on biological science-related research programmes. In addition, more females are enrolled in part-time research studies than males (54%-66% of the cohort for the last three years; Figure 2B), most of them on the MD (Res) programme.

**Figure 1.** Gender balance (%) of MSc Cancer student numbers completing the course. The number of students is shown on the bars.

**Figure 2.** Gender balance (%) of CI students enrolled on PGR courses. (A) All students including MPhil/PhD, MD (Res) and MBPhD. (B) The subset of these students that are enrolled as part-time. The number of students is shown on the bars.
Ratio of course applications to offers and acceptances by gender for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research 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.

The PGT course attracts approximately twice as many applications from females as males, and this ratio is maintained for both the offers made and ‘firm acceptances’ (Figure 3A). Therefore, we feel confident that females are not disproportionately ‘lost’ in the PGT recruitment process.

The PGR programmes also attract more applications from females, ranging from 54% to 64% of total applications (Figure 3B). Offers for PGR programmes were greater for females than males in 2010/11 and 2011/12, 60% and 65% of total offers, respectively. The 2012/13 academic year resulted in an offer rate of only 47% for females compared to males; however, this actually represents the difference of one less female than male due to the small size of the data set. The PGR acceptance rate echoes the offer rate each year (Figure 3B). We will continue to monitor the gender balance for applications, offers and acceptances for all of our postgraduate programmes (Action Plan, section 2.1(a)).

Figure 3. Gender balance (%) of students recruited to (A) the PGT programme (MSc Cancer) and (B) the PGR programmes. The number of students is shown on the bars. Acceptance rates for PGT programmes are approximately double the final number of students as ≈50% of them do not take up the place. Males □ Females □.
(vi) **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.

For the PGT programme, in 2010-11 the proportion of males attaining a merit or distinction award was greater than that for females (Figure 4). Encouragingly, this unfavourable gender balance has consistently improved, such that in 2012-13 more women than men achieved a merit or distinction award. The reasons for the increased success of women are not clear, but the course organiser (SAT member Julie Olszewski) will monitor future progress and report to the SAT.

![Figure 4. Academic achievement: distribution of award attained (%) according to gender and year of study for students completing the CI PGT programme (MSc Cancer); the number of students is shown on the bars. Males □ Females □.](image)

Note, four students completed the course but changed their programme of study to a Diploma, and have not been included here.

To assess research student performance, we have evaluated the time taken from PhD commencement to thesis submission. For a standard three year full-time studentship, the thesis should be submitted within four years. With the tightening up of regulations across UCL, along with better support by tutors and supervisors, the average time to submission is now under four years for both males and females (Table 2). There is no significant difference in time to submission based upon gender.

**Table 2.** Average time to PhD submission

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year of entry</th>
<th>2006/07</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.03 (7)</td>
<td>4.30 (6)</td>
<td>3.72 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.30 (7)</td>
<td>3.52 (2)</td>
<td>3.87 (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

UCL grading systems for academic/research staff are complex and overlapping. Therefore, to present detailed CI gender data in a meaningful way, we have defined 6 SWAN Grades of academic staff career development. These are shown in Figure 5, together with the Key Transition Points. It should be noted that the CI employs only a few Grade 1 staff who are training for a PhD. The standard route of entry is at Grade 2, with a PhD obtained during a studentship.

Figure 5. Definition of the SWAN Grades used for CI academic/research staff data.

| Grade 6 | International profile, high impact publication record, continued funding, enabling |
| Grade 5 | National profile, demonstrated impact of research, sustained funding, enabling |
| Grade 4 | Established group leader: obtained major grant/sustained funding/HEFCE |
| Grade 3 | Junior group leader: obtained own grant funding |
| Grade 2 | Postdoctoral: funded on grant held by another |
| Grade 1 | Research Assistant studying for PhD |

* Staff data does not include PhD studentships as they are documented under student data.
The gender balance for our total academic/research staff is shown below (Figure 6). In 2009 there were 136 such employees, of which about half (49%) were women. Since then, although the number of staff has increased to 198, the proportion of women has consistently remained close to 50%.

Figure 6. Gender balance (%) of academic/research staff employed in the CI. The number of staff is shown on the bars. Males □ Females □

The breakdown of staff gender balance according to career stage is shown in Figure 7. The majority of non-clinical staff enter the academic/research career path at SWAN Grade 2 or 3 and clinical staff enter at Grade 3. At these grades, approximately 50-60% of staff are women and this gender balance has been maintained for 5 years (Figure 7A). However, at more senior grades we observed an increasingly unfavourable gender balance, with only 20% women at Grade 6.

The key ‘cross-over’ point occurs between SWAN Grades 3 and 4, as illustrated in Figure 7B and, although the numbers are small, the Grade 4 imbalance is particularly marked for non-clinical staff where only 17% of staff are female (Figure 7C). This Grade 3-4 transition (Transition 3, Figure 5) occurs at the step from junior group leader to established group leader. It is an extremely competitive stage in the career path and also precarious as the majority of staff at Grades 3/4 do not have permanent (HEFCE) funded posts (page 25). One factor making women particularly vulnerable at this stage is that most individuals reach it when they are in their mid-thirties to mid-forties, an age at which the women are often taking career breaks to have children. Of the 21 pregnancies declared by CI academic/research staff over the last 3 years, the median age was 34 years (range 31-43). Thus Transition 3 has been key to the focus of many of our Athena SWAN initiatives over the past years. To support our women scientists at this crucial point we put in place a number of initiatives described in Section 4. We believe that these steps will lead to improving the gender imbalance in senior grades, although we recognise that measurable statistical change is likely to take a number of years.
Figure 7. Gender balance of CI academic/research staff on the 6 defined staff SWAN grades.

(A) Gender balance (%) of all academic/research staff 2009-2013 according to SWAN grade. The number of staff is shown on the bars.

(B) Details of staff employed in 2013.

(C) Clinical and non-clinical academic staff employed in 2013. The minimal grade of entry for clinical staff is Grade 3.
Turnover by grade and gender – comment on any differences between men and women in turnover and say what is being done to address this. Where the number of staff leaving is small, comment on the reasons why particular individuals left.

Data on the turnover of staff for Grades 2-3 between 2009 and 2013 are shown in Figure 8. Between 2009 and 2012, the relative proportion of women that left was greater than the proportion of men (8% versus 3% for 2009, 7% versus 1% for 2010, 10% versus 5% for 2011 and 7% versus 3% for 2012). However, because of the small numbers involved, none of these were statistically significantly different. In 2013, the turnover of female and male staff was equivalent (9% versus 10%).

Turnover for Grade 4-6 staff was very low; Grade 4 had 2 leavers, 1 female in 2011 and 1 male in 2012, Grade 6 had 1 male leaver in 2012. The SAT will continue to monitor this data, and henceforward will obtain information on the reasons for leaving through the implementation of exit interviews (Action Plan, sections 2.1(d), 2.2).

Figure 8. Gender balance (%) among staff who have left the CI, according to grade and year. The number of staff is shown on the bars. Males □ Females □.

(1996 words)

4. Supporting and advancing women’s careers: maximum 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.
Recruitment data for the last four years (Figure 9) revealed that more women than men applied for academic/research posts. Women were more likely to be invited for interview and (except for 2011) were more likely to be appointed. The SAT will continue to monitor recruitment to ensure that the gender balance for appointments is maintained.

![Figure 9. Gender balance (%) of applicants, interviewees and appointments made for all CI academic/research staff positions since 2010. The number of individuals is shown on the bars. Males □ Females □.](image)

(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.

Most of the staff on SWAN Grades 1 and 2 are not permanent and would not normally be considered for promotion. In the unusual case where their role changes during their contract period, they can submit their CV and self-assessment form for HoD’s approval, the HoD completes the re-grading form, which is considered by a UCL central committee. If the committee agrees that the role has changed sufficiently, then the individual’s grade is automatically changed. Progression from Grade 3 to Grade 4 usually occurs as a new job rather than a promotion.

Senior Academic promotions (to Grades 5 and 6) are initiated by an annual call from UCL and all eligible CI employees are entitled and encouraged to apply. The CI has an informal
process whereby candidates discuss suitability for promotion with the Director. Candidates who choose to go forward are supported with advice and feedback during the application. There is anecdotal evidence that men are more likely to initiate this process.

Data on applications for promotion are shown in Figure 10. In 2013, 1 of 2 women and 2 of 3 men who applied were successful. For previous years we were only able to obtain data on successful promotions, but henceforward we will maintain a local database on applications for promotion and their outcome (Action Plan, section 2.1(e)).

![Figure 10](image.png)

**Figure 10.** Gender balance (%) of applicants successful in promotion. The number of staff is shown on the bars. Males [ ] Females [ ].

In future we will:

- Encourage women to apply for promotion by identifying potential female applicants through our improved appraisal process (page 23) (Action Plan, section 5.3)
- Provide further support by ‘championing’ staff through the application, for example with mock promotion committees (Action Plan, section 5.5)

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 CI adheres to UCL equal opportunities policies with regards to recruitment and selection and CI-HR participates in the selection process ensuring that (i) shortlisting is conducted by at least 2 panel members, (ii) candidates are assessed against person specifications, (iii) positive action is used in a tie-break situation.

Positive action statements encouraging female applicants are automatically added by HR if the women are under-represented in the target group (e.g. Senior staff appointments). In addition, we work to actively attract female candidates by our Athena SWAN website that profiles women scientists and we are pro-active in seeking female applicants using head-hunters.

We have not previously had a formal procedure for documentation of interview panels, so do not hold accurate data on their composition. Our records show that 79 CI staff have attended UCL Recruitment and Training events, although we do not have further information on dates and trends. The CI Staffing Manager has now been given responsibility to maintain a local
database of gender balance in interview panels, and to ensure that each panel has at least 25% female representation and all panel members have completed diversity and recruitment training (Action Plan, section 3.1(a)). A report on the composition of panels and staff training will be given annually to the SAT.

(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.

Our grouping of staff into SWAN Grades (Figure 5) has defined 6 discrete career stages with 5 Transition Points. The first measurable attrition occurs at Transition 3, the move to established group leader with major/sustained grant funding, however, this cannot be viewed in isolation as preparation for transition 3 occurs at grades 1-3, and we have supported all stages as follows:

**a) Website**
We have a dedicated Athena SWAN website that is continuously updated with local and national activities, including valuable information training and advice links that are clearly noticeable on the CI homepage with our One-Stop-Shop signpost (shown left).

**b) Mentoring**
The scientific Group Mentoring Scheme (GMS) was initiated for SWAN Grade 3 researchers in 2011. The GMS panel is comprised of three CI scientists (one woman and two men); additional experts are involved at the request of mentees. The scheme allows mentees to obtain feedback about their scientific goals/strategy and evaluate timelines in relation to career progression. The panel also gives advice on staff recruitment/management and deployment of limited resources, issues that new group leaders tend to struggle with. The vision is to create a cohort of investigators who support one another through their fellowship period and beyond. The format is a monthly open-group session which has traditionally taken place after 5pm. Timing is currently under revision through consultations with mentors/mentees (Action Plan, section 6.1).

Our surveys (Section 5) indicated a need for mentoring and we responded with two approaches. First, we have encouraged staff to take advantage of current resources, by raising awareness during appraisals (page 23) and providing a ‘One-Stop-Shop’ on our Athena SWAN website, with continually updated links to available mentoring and career development schemes. Second, given the unfavourable gender balance in senior positions, we devised a bespoke mentoring scheme for Grade 2 and 3 women and funded appropriate training for fifteen CI staff members (9 women and 6 men) to become Athena SWAN mentors. The trainee mentors attended an academia-tailored course involving a full
day of face-to-face interactions, including role-play, and presentations of the skills and knowledge required to be an effective mentor. Subsequent evaluation via anonymous survey showed that 90% rated the event as excellent or very good. To date, 11 women scientists of SWAN grade 2 have been matched with a mentor.

The SAT will monitor success of mentoring by interview and survey (Action Plan, sections 1.1, 5.2), but we have anecdotal evidence of benefit from a postdoctoral fellow who successfully obtained an academic position as a Lecturer and returned to particularly thank her Athena SWAN mentor for her help and advice.

c) Careers workshops
The CI Academic Careers workshop was initiated in response to staff surveys (section 5). The first workshop, held in September 2013, was attended by 32 students and staff (26 women and 6 men). The aim was to provide a forum to obtain information about academic careers, hear about personal experiences, from senior research fellows through to professors, and to ask questions/voice concerns regarding academic careers. The morning session covered scientific and clinical academic career pathways. The afternoon session centred on support mechanisms to aid career progression and work-life balance. This included information on UCL maternity/paternity leave, flexible working arrangements, opportunities to be mentored by CI academic staff, services offered by the UCL Careers Service, and UCL academic promotion procedures. The day concluded with SMART guidelines to help attendees create an action plan towards achieving career goals.

Feedback from attendees was extremely positive, with 100% of respondents saying that the objectives of the course had been met and comments such as:

- “Excellent, very interactive, informative”
- “Very comprehensive, really useful resource”
- “Very helpful, very practical, thank you”
- “Enjoyed the discussion about the importance of career planning”
- “Speakers seemed very genuine and honest about their experiences”

Most of the respondents also indicated that they planned to pursue an academic career in research. The SAT voted to make the CI Academic Careers Workshop an annual event (Action Plan, section 5.1).

d) Grant/manuscript clinics and mock interviews
This programme was piloted in 2012 to empower SWAN Grade 3-6 researchers striving to secure funding and achieve high impact publications. It was designed to be flexible, providing individually-tailored support where needed for grant applications, panel interviews and manuscript preparation. The format is a 20-30 minute presentation followed by discussion with a panel selected by the presenter. Requests for a bespoke clinic are made by contacting HoDs with suggested names of panelists and potential dates for the meeting. The same format applies to clinics aimed at discussing content of a scientific manuscript or
grant close to submission, and to mock interviews to prepare researchers for scientific panel interviews for personal fellowships and programme grants.

Since late 2012, nine researchers have undergone clinics for grant (three women, one man) or manuscript (one woman) submissions and/or mock interviews (two women, four men), with six large programme grant/fellowship applications being funded (one woman, four men) and one manuscript published in a high-impact factor journal (a woman). The success of this scheme is partially due to its flexibility. One female researcher commented:

“I found UCL CI very helpful and supportive during my fellowship applications. I applied to CRUK, ERC and the MRC. I was invited for 2 interviews and for both of them there was an opportunity to practise with mock interviews. Colleagues that attended the interviews were selected so that they best covered the different areas of expertise that were important for my project. I was particularly helped by Prof. Paolo Salomoni, who is also a mentor and collaborator on the grant and generously helped me improve the project proposal and prepare the interview presentation.”

The grant/manuscript clinics and mock interviews scheme currently supports Transitions 3-5, but will now be extended to support SWAN Grade 2/Transition 2. In addition, we aim to increase the number of Grade 3-4 researchers, in particular women, utilising this form of support by recommendation during appraisals and advertisements in the CI Newsletter and on the Athena SWAN website. We will also survey individuals who have taken part in order to determine how the format can be improved. A clinic evaluation report will be produced, which will include a gender analysis of successful applications/submissions, and this will be presented to the SAT by the end of 2014 (Action Plan, section 5.4(a)).

e) Inspirational role models
To inspire our CI women researchers, SAT member Sue Hadjur organised a speaker programme entitled ‘Inspiring Excellence – Stories from Successful Women’. She deliberately invited women from a range of backgrounds and sectors to show the commonalities of experiences, and also the different meanings of ‘success’.

Speakers were asked to talk about their experiences in the workplace (negative as well as positive) and discuss the skills they felt contributed to their achievement. We have been incredibly fortunate to have had speakers such as Nicola Horlick, CEO of Rockpool...
Investments, Helena Morrissey CBE (shown page 21 with Sue Hadjur to her left), founder of the ‘30% Club’ group of business leaders committed to achieving 30% female representation on UK FTSE-100 boards by 2015, and Prof Dame Wendy Hall, one of the world’s leading computer scientists (shown page 21 with a visiting student). The series has offered a new and unique networking opportunity for women in the CI. Approximately 300 people have attended the events, both men and women, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive - approximately 95% of respondents rated the event as excellent/very good, with 80% indicating that they would like to attend similar events in the future and comments such as:

- “It was amazing to hear that Dame Wendy Hall and Sir Tim Berners-Lee still have grants rejected and how they cope with it, I learnt it is part of science and not to give up”
- “It was fascinating to see what some women are able to achieve despite significant institutional hurdles and personal circumstances”
- “The inspiring excellence seminar series were truly exceptional. Meeting these fantastic role models has truly aspired me to aim for a better work/life balance”

Another spin-off from the series is that Nicola Horlick met with SAT member Richard Sutton-Mattocks and agreed to become a Trustee of the CI Research Trust, a charity dedicated to supporting the work of the CI. Nicola’s association with the CI will continue to provide a positive and inspirational role model for our women scientists. We plan to continue this lecture series in future (Action Plan, section 4.1(a)).

f) Cancer Institute Research-in-Progress Seminars (CIRPS):
CIRPS meetings, initiated in 2010, are a forum to facilitate exchange of information between postdoctoral fellows (SWAN grade 2) from different laboratories, as well as PhD students close to thesis submission. Meetings take place weekly and there is an equal gender balance of presenters (Figure 11). Presentations are relatively informal and about current research (as opposed to ‘finished stories’).

![Figure 11. Gender balance (%) of speakers at CIRPS events (the number of speakers is shown on the bars). Males □ Females □.](image)

The meetings take place in the Paul O’Gorman Courtyard café, an ideal space for discussion and networking (page 28); social interaction is further encouraged with the provision of free tea and coffee. CIRPS meetings provide an important opportunity for SWAN Grade 1-2 researchers to practice their oral presentation skills and learn how to respond to criticism in front of a mixed audience.

From September 2014 we are introducing a system whereby a panel of group leaders will attend the meetings to lead a more challenging questioning session and provide feedback that will enable the presenter to improve their performance. The sessions will also be used to
identify Grade 2 staff in need of support or those who may be ready to tackle Transition 2 (Action Plan, section 5.4(b)).

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?

Currently, appraisals are focused on general staff development needs, but we have identified the appraisal as an opportunity for staff to consider promotion and for raising awareness of mentoring, coaching, and work/life balance. A series of additional questions such as “Have you considered going for Promotion?”,”Do you know what the criteria are for each stage?”,”Would you like more information about the UCL and UCL-CI Promotion Policies?” and “Would you like guidance on how to best achieve promotion?” have been introduced since April 2014.

Staff interested in promotion will be invited to take advantage of our newly implemented mock promotion scheme (Action Plan, section 5.5), and staff interested in advice on careers development, mentoring or work/life balance will be guided to the most appropriate source, either by discussion during the appraisal or through the links on our One-Stop-Shop. The new appraisals now take place annually instead of biennially.

UCL’s promotions criteria incorporate consideration for teaching, research and enabling activities (including administration, pastoral and outreach work) and also provide for allowances in terms of the quantity of output where staff have taken periods of maternity/paternity leave. This will be discussed during appraisals and considered during mock promotions (Action Plan, sections 5.3, 5.5).

(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?

All new CI staff and students attend an induction session where they are reminded to complete the UCL on-line diversity training module. Since April 2013 the induction has included a discussion of the Athena SWAN charter, CI Athena SWAN initiatives and activities, and a leaflet with information relating to Athena SWAN, including the website address.
During induction, staff are also introduced to the CI DEOLO and informed of their named representative who acts as the local point of contact. Information received from the UCL Equalities and Diversity team is distributed by e-mail to these representatives and passed on to their groups as appropriate.

To date, inductions have not included information about promotion procedures, training, mentoring and career development opportunities but these will be added within the next year in addition to information on unconscious bias training, which touches on gender (Action Plan, section 1.2(e)).

(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.

We are committed to supporting postgraduate students and they all have access to our full-time female Graduate Tutor who provides mentoring and support in their career ambitions. Students are also encouraged to attend Athena SWAN events, in addition to the external speaker seminar series and CIRPS meetings. There are plenty of opportunities for students to meet others, discuss science, and network. For instance, students are often invited to attend small group, informal lunches with external speakers from our seminar series. We also work to ensure that students have financial support to travel to conferences to present their research and network for future employment via our Institute’s ‘Kitty Cookson’ Conference Travel fund, generously donated by, and named after, a patient.

To encourage female students and raise awareness of successful female scientists, the CI Research Trust will fund an annual Athena SWAN award for excellence in Science. The award (£250) will be given to the top performing MSc Cancer student (male or female). Each year it will be named after a different inspirational female scientist and will be accompanied by a synopsis of her achievements (Action Plan, section 4.2).

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 6 main CI committees (Figure 12) are:

1. CI Executive Board
2. Athena SWAN SAT
3. Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre (ECMC) committee
4. Comprehensive Cancer Imaging Centre (CCIC) committee
5. Graduate Teaching and Research Committee (GT&RC)
6. Student-Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC)
**Figure 12.** Gender balance (%) among CI committees. The number of members is given on the bars. Males □ Females □.

The CI Executive Board, our key decision-making body, was traditionally composed of HoDs, and from 2011-2013 had only 1 female board member. Following the 2013 board meeting, a new CI Executive Board has been established under the interim directorship of Tariq Enver. The revised board (from April 2014) is composed of 18 members (9 men, 9 women) and meets quarterly. It has an expanded number of ex-officio members, identified as representing leadership roles, and includes the Athena SWAN lead, heads of key scientific initiatives, representatives from other members of the Cancer Division and junior group leaders.

The composition of the Athena SWAN SAT is described on page 6. It has maintained a majority of women, but over 30% are men who are all strongly committed to gender equality.

The CCIC and ECMC grant committees are designed to foster interactions and collaborations between scientists with shared interests beyond the UCL CI. The ECMC is a national network established to speed-up translation of new cancer therapies into the clinic. The CCIC is a collaborative centre between UCL and Kings College London and aims to utilise imaging technologies to better understand cancer. Members for both the CCIC and ECMC committees are identified based on their expertise, ability and vision in leading key themes. The CCIC meets quarterly and The ECMC meets biannually.

The GT&RC and SSCC meet biannually. Invitation to the committees is by e-mail to all CI students and group leaders/supervisors. There is a strong female representation on the GT&RC and over 70% female members on the SSCC; neither has yet met in 2014.

(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.

Most CI academic/research staff have open-ended contracts with end dates determined by the duration of grant funding. We have only 35 (17 clinical, 18 non-clinical) academic/research staff who receive at least part of their funding from HEFCE (Figure 13),
although many of these receive funding from a combination of sources (e.g. HEFCE, NHS, NIHR Biomedical Research Centre). In order to receive HEFCE funding, a business case is required by the University that shows how the individual will generate income through teaching, research grants and other activities. Our gender balance (Figure 13) indicates that, for non-clinical staff, this has been relatively successful and women are as likely as men to get permanent jobs, although it is not as favourable for female clinical staff. The SAT will continue to monitor progress and use positive action to identify women for future business cases, e.g. through the appraisal process (Action Plan, sections 2.1(f), 5.5).

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 the issue of ‘committee overload’ is addressed where there are small numbers of female staff?

The main decision-making committee, the Executive Board, now has 50% female representation and both ECMC and CCIC committees improved the gender balance between 2013 and 2014 (Figure 12), although there is room for improvement on the CCIC. There is also concern regarding the high representation of women on the SAT and SSCC, implying that diversity, gender balance, teaching and pastoral roles might be perceived as ‘feminine’ issues, allowing men to be exempted to focus on research. The committee composition will be reviewed to ensure more even distribution of administration and enabling tasks (Action Plan, section 2.1(g)).
We are aware that under-representation of women in senior Grades 4-6 can lead to committee overload for senior female staff. In the longer term this will be rectified by ensuring that more women are promoted to senior roles. More immediately, discussions will take place on ways to encourage and train junior women to serve on committee meetings and introduce them to the decision-making processes in the CI (Action Plan, section 6.2).

(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 CI does not have an official workload model; as a research institute, our academic/research staff do little or no undergraduate teaching and are well supported by the following full-time posts, currently all held by women who sit on the SAT:

- Graduate tutor
- DEOLO, who is also responsible for outreach, inductions and health/safety
- CI Staffing Manager

We are aware that women play a more extensive role than men in enabling and will address this by balancing the committees (as discussed above), creating a spreadsheet of key enabling roles to ensure that individuals do not do too many ‘extra’ jobs on top of research, and discussing work-load during appraisals (Action Plan, section 5.3). We have recently appointed a new female CI Manager who will join the SAT and, to ensure that CI female academic/research staff are not overburdened with administrative tasks, both the CI Manager and CI Staffing Manager posts have been reconfigured to ensure they have the capacity to support our Athena SWAN initiatives. For example, the CI Manager’s remit now includes support for delivering the equality aims of the CI and working with our HR team to ensure monitoring of gender balance on recruitment panels, completion of staff appraisals, promotion and maternity/paternity/adoption leave rates.

(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.

All major and decision-making meetings, including CIRPS, have been moved to core hours of 10am – 4pm except for the external speaker programme. This originally took place from 5pm - 6pm, followed by a networking session. At the SAT’s request it was piloted at a 4pm start. Consultations will take place to review this (Action Plan, section 6.1).

(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.

The central Hub of the CI is the architect award-winning Paul O’Gorman Building situated in central London amongst the busy cafes and shops of Tottenham Court Road and in the heart of the UCL Bloomsbury campus, with its associated cultural and student activities. With 4500sqm laboratory and office space distributed over 6 floors the Paul O’Gorman Building
hosts over 29 labs, contributing to an immense variety of staff of different ethnicity, age and religious background. Each floor holds a seminar room that can be used as a communal area for lunch breaks and meetings.

The Courtyard Café joins the Paul O’Gorman Building and the Rockefeller Building and creates a central meeting place for all CI staff. The café is used for social events (e.g. Quiz night, Christmas parties) in addition to scientific seminars (below), generating a ‘village green’ atmosphere.

Since formation of the SAT, we have worked with some success to improve the gender balance of the Courtyard Café external speaker seminars (Figure 14) and will continue to monitor this (Action Plan, section 3.1(c)).

As postgraduate students are an integral part of the CI, we have a dedicated society with monthly events within and outside the CI (movie and quiz nights, museum visits, dinners, etc). The society provides opportunities to have fun, meet fellow students from different departments and share the ups and downs of postgraduate life. The CI also engages with staff from other departments and non-scientific audience through media such as the quarterly published CI newsletter, TV, charity events and social media including twitter to update with upcoming events, publications and relevant news.

Figure 14. Gender balance (%) for CI External Speaker Seminars. The number of staff is shown on the bars. Males ☐ Females ☐. There were overall fewer speakers in 2013-2014 because the format changed from two to one speaker per session.
We particularly promote Athena SWAN during an annual ‘SWAN week’ organised by the SAT. Our second SWAN week (April 2014), included a careers talks day attended by over 60 people and followed by a networking lunch.

SAT members Elitza Deltcheva and Anja Hafemann, organisers of the 2014 SWAN week, are shown above at the Information Stand.

The SWAN careers talks were well received with comments such as:

- “It was really great to meet other scientists, especially women, and to hear about their experiences”
- “Highly motivating and further confirmed my decision to pursue an academic career”
- “Very useful in pointing out the importance of social media in today’s job market. Since then I’ve started expanding my network of professionals”
- “It was inspiring to hear honest accounts from people at different stages of their career. It was reassuring to know that their career paths have not always gone smoothly but they succeeded anyway”

(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.

Since its opening the Institute has encouraged young people (16-18 years) to visit the laboratories and participate in hands-on experience (73 students, 55% female, over the last 5 years). All our staff participate, under the direction of the CI work placement co-ordinator (SAT member Sonia Buckingham). The Athena SWAN charter is discussed at their introductory session to emphasise its importance in their future science careers. Our staff also support a wide network of outreach volunteering programmes. For example: Tariq Enver works with Holland Park School to participate in a day that promotes science and female scientific achievement; Paolo Salomoni hosts ‘A’ level female students for short
laboratory placements every summer and a number of staff are trained as STEMM ambassadors, volunteering to work with schools as a role model for scientific subjects.

Our involvement with the Brilliant Club is a newly-integrated outreach project initiated by graduate student Maha Abdollah (Case Study 2). The Brilliant Club is a charity that recruits PhD students and postdoctoral researchers to give university-style tutorials to high-performing pupils in low-participating non-selective state schools. Maha has become a Brilliant Club tutor and has been placed in an all-girls school to encourage girls at a young age to pursue a career in science. A group of 12 pupils has recently visited the CI to experience the teaching and working environment of a university campus. Pupils and teachers alike were inspired by their visit, depicted below with examples of feedback.

Maha with her first students - March 2013.

- “I liked meeting the scientists and talking to them about their experience and it was interesting to see the things they have faced in their pathway”
- “I got to meet someone who has achieved a PhD on cancer research”
- “This trip helped in showing me how researchers go about their research. Also it made the topic more relevant now”
- “I have always been interested in a career in science, but this trip has helped motivate me”

Maha is now working to recruit more researchers to become Brilliant Club tutors, in the CI and across UCL (Action Plan, section 4.1(c)).

**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.

The number of staff taking maternity leave increased between 2008 and 2013 with the growth of the CI (Figure 15). With the exception of 2008/09, when only 2 women took maternity leave, there is a high return rate of >70%. The SAT will continue to monitor maternity return rates and will include an interview prior to and after maternity leave to assess particular needs, and canvas opinion about setting up a maternity/mentoring buddy scheme that starts before maternity leave (Action Plan, section 6.3).
(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.

There are no records of staff taking adoption, parental or paternity leave. However, it is likely that this is due to low reporting, rather than fathers and partners not taking any paternity leave (for example, Paolo Salomoni, a SAT member, has recently taken 4 weeks paternity leave). Henceforward, the CI will collect data on paternity/adoptions leave (Action Plan, section 2.1(d)). In addition, we will continue to promote awareness of leave entitlements through SWAN week, leaflets, newsletters, our Athena SWAN website and at inductions.

(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 CI does not hold records on applications for flexible working as it is simply the accepted working culture (see below).

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.

Academics/researchers in the CI traditionally enjoy flexible working as part of their academic freedom. Indeed, for many, it is a major attraction of the job. There has been a reluctance to
formalise this arrangement as it is so valued by our staff, and results from the UCL-wide 2013 staff survey show that 90% (92% of women) of CI research/academic staff responded positively to the question ‘my work time can be flexible’. Also, 63% of academic/research staff (71% of women) responded positively to “I can meet the requirements of my job without regularly working excessive hours” – this is higher than the UCL average (36% average for research/academic staff, 40% female).

However, we recognise that some staff may prefer more formal arrangements and from 2014 we have included the following questions at appraisal “Would you like to work more flexibly?” and “For you, would this be best informally or with a formal arrangement?” We will also canvas opinion by anonymous staff survey and the SAT will review the situation annually (Action Plan, section 1.1).

(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.

A one-off focus working group was held in November 2013 for parents and carers to discuss what improvements the CI could make regarding maternity/carers and adoption leave. The focus group identified that the CI was following UCL guidance but did not have specific information for academics. To action this, we developed a leaflet supplementing UCL guidance and including key points for academics, e.g. contacts for funding bodies, keeping-in-touch days, and links to information websites. The leaflet was submitted to staff returning from maternity leave or due to start in the next 3-6 months. It was positively welcomed and since March 2014 has been distributed to all new starters. A major issue identified was the lack of a local facility to express milk. In response, the CI has converted and equipped a room within the Paul O’Gorman Building as a bookable quiet/lactating area. This permits increased flexibility and removes the requirement to walk to the communal UCL facility.

(4997 words)

5. Any other comments: maximum 500 words

Please comment here on any other elements which are relevant to the application, e.g. other STEMM-specific initiatives of special interest that have not been covered in the previous sections. Include any other relevant data (e.g. results from staff surveys), provide a commentary on it and indicate how it is planned to address any gender disparities identified.

Our staff surveys have played an important role in guiding the Athena SWAN initiatives that we have set up. The first survey, sent to postgraduate research students and all CI staff (academic/research and administrative) in January 2013, was broadly designed to determine awareness of gender equality policies and practices within the CI, and to canvas opinion on specific issues that could be amenable to change. Overall, 198 staff responded to our survey, of which 60% were women. A striking result was that only 41% of respondents had heard of Athena SWAN, and this was the same for women and men. There was also a general lack of knowledge of the CI gender equality and maternity/paternity leave policies, and promotion requirements. However, the majority felt that work allocation and training/career development opportunities were offered irrespective of gender, with only 5% considering that this was not the case. SWAN week in February 2013 was our first major initiative to promote Athena SWAN in the CI.
Our second survey in July 2013 was only sent to research staff and students, as they are our priority, and focused on very specific issues where gender support could be introduced. Overall, 123 responded and 55% were women. It was encouraging to note that 85% of respondents knew about Athena SWAN. A number of positive actions have resulted as a consequence of these surveys. Particular highlights include establishment of our SWAN week as an annual event (page 29); talks from ‘Inspirational Women’ (page 21) aimed at providing strong female role models and highlighting transferable skills required for success in any field (43% of female staff showed an interest in these); an Academic Careers Day workshop (page 20) to provide information on academic career paths and guidance on constructing an action plan for short- and longer-term career goals (of interest to 52% of female junior researchers/students); and a dedicated mentoring scheme (page 19) to support women’s career development (of interest to 50% of female junior researchers/students). We will continue to carry out biennial surveys to capture response to our activities, ensure that researchers are aware of support and opportunities available to them, and determine interest in potential new initiatives.

(361 words)

6. **Action plan**

Provide an action plan as an appendix. An action plan template is available on the Athena SWAN website.

The Action Plan should be a table or a spreadsheet comprising actions to address the priorities identified by the analysis of relevant data presented in this application, success/outcome measures, the post holder responsible for each action and a timeline for completion. The plan should cover current initiatives and your aspirations for the next three years.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue and area for action identified</th>
<th>Actions taken and outcome as of April 2014</th>
<th>Further actions planned</th>
<th>Time-scales</th>
<th>Responsibility [SAT member]</th>
<th>Success Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Athena SWAN awareness and information dissemination</td>
<td>Fact-finding survey of all CI staff (including admin) conducted in January 2013 indicated only 41% of responders were aware of Athena SWAN. A follow-up survey in July 2013, sent just to research staff and students post-SWAN week as they are the major focus of our Athena SWAN initiatives, indicated this had risen to 85%</td>
<td>Repeat every 2 years to monitor progress, with modifications to assess awareness of Athena SWAN initiatives, benefit obtained from these initiatives, and other potential areas for development</td>
<td>July 2014, July 2016</td>
<td>Rosemary Gale [SAT], Allan Hackshaw [SAT]</td>
<td>Increase in number of responders (32% of those sent the follow-up survey responded) &lt;br&gt; Increase to &gt;90% aware of Athena SWAN principles and practices in the CI amongst males and females at all grades by 2017 &lt;br&gt; Positive response to Athena SWAN initiatives, and suggestions for improvements and other developments</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Actions to promote Athena SWAN initiatives and gender-focused issues and activities</td>
<td>(a) ‘SWAN week’ held in Spring term with information stand at entry to the main CI building, staffed during core hours, providing literature and information on Athena SWAN activities, gender equality policies and other relevant links. SWAN week in 2014 also included a day of Careers Talks by invited speakers</td>
<td>SWAN week 2014 has just taken place and feedback is not yet available, although 60 people attended the Careers Talks Day. Plans for 2015 will depend on the feedback, to be assessed in the July 2014 survey.</td>
<td>Annual event, held in Spring term</td>
<td>SAT chair &lt;br&gt; All SAT members to support as required</td>
<td>Increased awareness of and engagement with Athena SWAN initiatives, as assessed by survey response and numbers attending organised events, e.g. Increase from 64% aware of SWAN week in 2013 to &gt;80% by 2017</td>
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| (b) Athena SWAN website set up as a link on the UCL CI website to introduce SAT members, promote and report on initiatives and events, record successes by female staff and students, provide links for information and a channel for communication | Updated with specific events and new information as appropriate  
Monitor e-mails sent to the site on a regular basis  
Monitor numbers accessing the site | Reviewed annually by SAT in Autumn term, post-survey evaluation | Beth Payne [SAT], Berend Tolner | Site regularly accessed  
Positive response through CI survey. Increase from 56% aware in 2013 survey to >80% by 2017  
Staff and student engagement with events |
| (c) CI Athena SWAN Twitter account set up as a channel for communication, passing on information and news of events | Updated with specific events and new information as appropriate | Reviewed annually by SAT in Autumn term, post-survey evaluation | Adele Fielding [SAT] | Regular tweets and increase in number of followers (currently 23) |
| (d) Information and news about Athena SWAN included in the CI newsletters | Reports on specific events and new information included as appropriate | One letter produced per term | Institute Director [SAT] | Positive response through CI survey  
Staff and student engagement with events |
| (e) Since April 2013, the mandatory induction training for all new staff and students includes information on gender issues and Athena SWAN actions in the CI, and an information leaflet is provided | Include information on schemes available for personal training, mentoring and career development and promotion procedures, as well as unconscious bias training  
Update according to any changes in practice and new information | Autumn term 2014  
Reviewed annually in Autumn term or, if key change, implement earlier | Sonia Buckingham [SAT] | Improved awareness of relevant issues and satisfaction with information provided, as assessed in biennial CI survey, which will include length of CI employment. Currently it is estimated that <10% of new staff/students are aware of Athena SWAN |
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<tr>
<td>(f) Online diversity training has been obligatory for all new staff as part of their probation since 2010. A revised test was introduced in 2013 and response has been monitored by the CI since January 2014</td>
<td>Encourage all existing staff who have not completed training since the new Equality Act in 2010 to do so</td>
<td>Reviewed annually in Autumn term</td>
<td>Institute Director [SAT]</td>
<td>All staff to have completed training by July 2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Encourage all staff to do refresher training every 2 years</td>
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<td>CI Staffing Manager [SAT]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monitor response by statistics available from HR</td>
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2. Gender data collection and monitoring

2.1 Availability of data to assess gender equality issues within the CI

Early on in the self-assessment process it was evident that the data available was often incomplete or inaccurate. Wherever possible, information has been collected at source (e.g. individual HoDs for promotions, PIs for follow-up of staff)

Improve gender data reporting, collection and monitoring, implementing online systems wherever possible, with a particular focus on the following areas:

(a) Recruitment of PGT and PGR students
(b) Interview panels for staff selection and recruitment
(c) Staff training in Recruitment and Selection
(d) Turnover of staff, career breaks and maternity/paternity/adoption leave
(e) Applications for promotion and success rates
(f) Proportions on open-ended and longer-term permanent contracts
(g) Committee compositions

Annual report provided to SAT in Autumn term

Julie Olszewski [SAT] for student data
CI Staffing Manager [SAT] for staff data
Institute Director [SAT] and Institute Manager [SAT] for committees

Accurate annual records for staff and student recruitment, interview panels showing at least 25% female representation, staff turnover, promotion, maternity/paternity leave

Targeted actions in place, where relevant, in response to accurate data
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Documentation of reasons for staff turnover</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exit interviews will be introduced and information on reasons for leaving collected and collated</td>
<td>Start in Autumn term 2014</td>
<td>Institute Director [SAT] and CI Staffing Manager [SAT]</td>
<td>Improved awareness of issues resulting in staff turnover and possible areas where individuals require better support</td>
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<td>3. Women’s representation</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Improve gender balance on CI panels and committees</td>
<td>(a) Interview panels</td>
<td>Ensure that composition of recruitment panels is recorded online, that all panel members have competed diversity and recruitment training, and that all panels include the required minimum 25% female representation</td>
<td>Annual report provided to SAT in Autumn term</td>
<td>Institute Director [SAT]</td>
<td>All interview panels are documented and include at least 25% women</td>
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<td>CI Staffing Manager, [SAT]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) CI Executive Board and committees</td>
<td>Restructuring to increase female representation at senior levels of policy-making within the CI commenced in 2014 and is ongoing to include all relevant committees. Any new committees will require at least 25% female representation</td>
<td>Started early 2014; complete by end of 2014</td>
<td>Institute Director [SAT]</td>
<td>Maintained high level of female representation on CI Executive Board (currently 50%, up from 9% in 2013). All other committees have at least 25% women</td>
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<td>CI Staffing Manager</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) CI invited seminar speakers</td>
<td>Annual reminder to seminar organisers to aim for gender equality of invited speakers</td>
<td>Review annually in Summer term</td>
<td>Institute Director [SAT]</td>
<td>Maintain proportion of female speakers at 33% or more</td>
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<td>SAT chair</td>
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2.2 Documentation of reasons for staff turnover:
Exit interviews will be introduced and information on reasons for leaving collected and collated.

3. Women’s representation:

3.1 Improve gender balance on CI panels and committees:
(a) Interview panels
Available data on recruitment panels collected and evaluated but documentation of actual panels not always accurate.
Ensure that composition of recruitment panels is recorded online, that all panel members have competed diversity and recruitment training, and that all panels include the required minimum 25% female representation.

(b) CI Executive Board and committees
Available data on gender composition of CI committees collected and evaluated.
Restructuring to increase female representation at senior levels of policy-making within the CI commenced in 2014 and is ongoing to include all relevant committees. Any new committees will require at least 25% female representation.
Consultations on how best to encourage, train and enable junior female researchers to sit on committees.

(c) CI invited seminar speakers
Data on proportion of male/female CI seminar speakers reviewed.
Annual reminder to seminar organisers to aim for gender equality of invited speakers.

3. Maintaining a high level of female representation on CI Executive Board (currently 50%, up from 9% in 2013). All other committees have at least 25% women.
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<tr>
<td>and indicated that women are markedly under-represented</td>
<td>Monitor annually and review</td>
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### 4. Women as role models

#### 4.1 Promotion of women as role models

- **(a)** Seminar series on ‘Inspiring Excellence – Stories from Successful Women’, with speakers from a wide variety of disciplines
  - 4 seminars held to date. Feedback form sent out to attendees after each seminar: so far ≈80% of respondents have indicated they would attend future ‘Inspiring Excellence’ events
  - SAT will review the series in the Summer term, discuss suggestions on the feedback forms, and plan series for next academic year
  - Reviewed by SAT in Summer term
  - Suzana Hadjur [SAT]
  - Attendance figures indicate interest and engagement
  - Positive response in feedback forms maintained

- **(b)** Networking with women in other professions through engagement with external companies to identify different strategies for promoting women and dealing with gender issues.
  - First meeting held with Clifford Chance law firm in January 2014
  - Following this meeting Laura King, global head of HR for Clifford Chance, has agreed to share her considerable experience in tackling gender imbalance issues at senior level by becoming an external advisor to the SAT team
  - Annual meetings
  - Chrissie Thirlwell [SAT], Richard Sutton-Mattocks [SAT]
  - Increased awareness and discussion by SAT of new developments in the private sector that would benefit our Athena SWAN activities

- **(c)** Outreach to schools through encouraging female PhD students to become tutors in the Brilliant Club
  - One PhD student already accepted as a tutor and will give a series of 6 seminars to pupils from an all-girls school
  - Encourage other students to become tutors
  - 2014-2017
  - Sonia Buckingham [SAT]
  - Maintain at least one Brilliant Club tutor from the CI a year
<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Raising awareness of inspirational female scientists</td>
<td>Creation of an Athena SWAN award for excellence in Science to be awarded to the MSc student with the highest mark. Named after a different eminent female scientist each year, with a synopsis of their achievements. Suggestions to be canvassed from CI staff and students then assessed by SAT committee.</td>
<td>To be introduced at end of 2013/14 academic year. Given annually thereafter</td>
<td>SAT chair, Julie Olszewski [SAT]</td>
<td>Career progress of recipient followed through LinkedIn site for MSc alumni and reported to SAT committee</td>
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5. Promoting and supporting women’s careers

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<tr>
<th>5.1 Provide careers advice through a CI Academic Careers Day targeted predominantly at women</th>
<th>The first Careers Day took place in September 2013 with 32 attendees (26 women and 6 men)</th>
<th>Annual event</th>
<th>Annually in Autumn term</th>
<th>Julie Olszewski [SAT]</th>
<th>Maintain/increase attendance</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Monitor for content as indicated by feedback forms and amend accordingly</td>
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<td>Positive response as measured by feedback forms</td>
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<td>Suggestions for improved content</td>
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<td>5.2 Provide one-to-one career mentoring, focussing on women at key career transition points</td>
<td>Dedicated mentors have received training. Women academics at post-doc level and above who want to be mentored have been identified. The first mentor-mentee pairings have been established.</td>
<td>All women post-docs and above who want to be mentored to be paired by July 2014</td>
<td>Reviewed annually</td>
<td>Paolo Salomoni [SAT], Chrissie Thirlwell [SAT]</td>
<td>Increased awareness of mentoring scheme and its impact as assessed in the CI survey, from 45% in 2013 to &gt;80% in 2017</td>
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<td>Feedback from mentees and mentors for impact and areas for improvement monitored in staff survey</td>
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<td>Successful pairing of senior women staff by May 2014</td>
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<td>Positive response to the</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.3 Increase completion rate for appraisals and improve process to better identify and encourage candidates for promotion</td>
<td>As of January 2014, annual (rather than biennial) appraisals have been implemented</td>
<td>Train more mentors as required</td>
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<td>At least 95% of staff to have had an appraisal in the last 12 months by July 2014 (currently 68% completion rate)</td>
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<td>Monitor completion rate</td>
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<td>Introduce an additional section in the appraisal to facilitate discussion of promotion aspirations, prospects and requirements, and work-load</td>
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<td>Ensure that Training and Development needs are discussed as part of the appraisal and appropriate action taken</td>
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<td>Institute Director [SAT]</td>
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<td>Institute Manager [SAT]</td>
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<td>CI Staffing Manager, [SAT]</td>
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<td>All CI appraisers</td>
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<td>5.4 Increase promotion prospects by improving academic output</td>
<td>Support clinics for assessing individual grant applications, manuscript submissions and interview performance, piloted in 2012 to improve success rate, a vital component of application for promotion</td>
<td>Obtain feedback on current pilot scheme from recipients</td>
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<td>Increase awareness of the scheme by advertising in the CI newsletter, on the website, and through appraisals</td>
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<td>Extend programme to staff at lower SWAN grades, i.e. Transition Point 2</td>
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<td>Institute Director [SAT]</td>
<td>Increase in grant funding obtained and manuscript acceptance</td>
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<td>Paolo Rodriguez-Viciana, CIRPS organiser.</td>
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<td>Increase in number of staff put forward for Transition Point 1, as assessed in promotion data collection and monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5 Improve promotion success rate</td>
<td>A link to the list of female-only and career re-entry fellowships that is available on the UCL Athena SWAN website has been included on the CI Athena SWAN website</td>
<td>Create a more extensive database of fellowships for biomedical researchers at different Transition Points. Update as schemes are changed or introduced</td>
<td>Available from Spring term 2015</td>
<td>Institute Director [SAT] Institute Manager [SAT] CI Staffing Manager [SAT]</td>
<td>Increase in number of women applying for and obtaining promotion, as assessed in data collection and monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Provide information on available fellowships, in particular for those restricted to women</td>
<td>CI invited seminars, CIRPS meetings and Group Leader mentoring sessions were held outside of core hours</td>
<td>CI invited seminars have been brought forward to 4pm and consultations will take place to determine whether this should be retained or changed to an alternative time Since April 2014, CIRPS meetings have been moved to 10am start Discussions planned for changing timing of GMS mentoring sessions</td>
<td>Summer term with aim to introduce in Autumn 2014</td>
<td>Institute Director [SAT] Institute Manager</td>
<td>Response to meeting times will be monitored through the CI survey</td>
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6. Organisation and culture

6.1 Timing of meetings
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>6.2 Guarding against committee and administrative overload</td>
<td></td>
<td>Committee compositions will be reviewed to ensure senior female staff are limited in the number of committees they sit on. Discussions on how to involve junior female staff in decision-making committees</td>
<td>Autumn term 2014</td>
<td>Institute Director [SAT] Institute Manager [SAT]</td>
<td>Improved distribution of female staff on committees</td>
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<td>6.3 Support for women on maternity leave</td>
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<td>(a) Introduce interviews prior to and after maternity leave to assess particular needs and issues, e.g. publication authorship (b) Canvas opinions from staff post-maternity leave and with newly declared pregnancies for setting up a maternity mentoring buddy scheme</td>
<td>Spring term 2015</td>
<td>Sonia Buckingham [SAT]</td>
<td>Areas for improved support identified. Procedures put in place to introduce improvements</td>
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</table>
7. Case study: impacting on individuals: maximum 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. More information on case studies is available in the guidance.

Case Study 1: Clare Bennett (SAT member)

I am a non-clinical scientist specialising in dendritic cell immunotherapy. After doing my PhD in Edinburgh and a post-doctoral job in the Netherlands, I came to the CI as a Wellcome Trust Fellow with one year of salary support remaining, attracted by the strong track record at UCL in cancer immunotherapy. Under the mentorship of Ronjon Chakraverty, I was awarded a Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research Career Development Fellowship, which provided five years funding for my own salary plus costs and that of a technician, and enabled me to establish myself as an independent scientist. Having recently completed this award, I have now successfully obtained further grant funding. The CI played an important role in assisting me throughout these applications, offering both practical and academic support, and I also received excellent administrative assistance that facilitated the process. In addition, with my recent promotion to Senior Lecturer, the CI has now taken on my salary support, and this provides me with a more secure basis from which to apply for further grant funding.

I have a firm belief that an academic career can be achieved equally well whilst having and raising a family, and during the 5 years of my career development award I gave birth to two children, taking approximately seven months maternity leave with each child. The CI was very supportive throughout both periods of maternity leave; for example, it provided invaluable administrative assistance for sorting out issues of timing and funding with my funding body. When I came back to work after having had my first child I went onto an 80% contract, coming to the lab/office four days per week, and this has continued after my recent return from the second maternity leave. I have benefited from a positive attitude in the CI that has facilitated my flexible working pattern. My colleagues have always accepted my time schedules and been willing to arrange meetings that suited me and allowed for the necessary childcare arrangements. Prior to returning to work, I came to the lab informally for occasional meetings and was able to bring my children during these visits without any problem. Throughout this experience, CI faculty and support staff have always been friendly and supportive of my family role.

At UCL, and within the CI, I have felt surrounded by successful woman role models who have encouraged me to feel that there is no barrier to my succeeding in my own scientific career. Many of them have been personally supportive and have provided advice on matters such as academic promotion. My recent success in being promoted to Senior Lecturer is testament to the support of the then Director of the CI, Chris Bosshoff, who was completely unperturbed by my current need to work a reduced contract. (458 words)

Case Study 2: Maha Abdollah (non-SAT member)

I am a third year PhD student in Prof Kerry Chester’s lab. I graduated in 2006 from the Faculty of Pharmacy, Ain Shams University in Cairo, and then worked in both the private and public sectors, which gave me a chance to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. I came to London in 2010 to do the MSc (Cancer) at UCL. I was fascinated by the research I heard about. Professor Kerry Chester was one of our lecturers, and her passion for her work was one of the main factors in my decision to pursue a career in research. Her positive attitude towards the role of
women in a scientific career, which was backed up by other female scientists I met in the CI, was also a great encouragement to me. With assistance from the CI I therefore applied for and obtained an Overseas Research Scholarship, which is a highly competitive UCL scholarship programme to fund overseas PhD students that provided £20,000/year towards my tuition fees. In addition, the CI graduate tutor, Dr. Olszewski (Julie), nominated me for a UCL Global Excellence Scholarships for £5000 towards my stipend. I was one of only 8 winners from across all UCL departments, the candidate representing Africa, and the only one from Biomedicine. Professor Chester (Kerry) secured the remaining funding that was needed to enable me to study in the CI. Without the help and support of the CI, in particular Kerry and Julie, doing a PhD at UCL would not have been possible for me.

One of my passions has always been teaching, and as a way of passing on the support that I had received as a woman setting out on a scientific career, I became a Brilliant Club tutor. The Club is a UK charity that recruits doctoral/post-doctoral researchers to deliver university-style tutorials to high-performing pupils in low-participating non-selective state schools. I have been placed in Fulham Cross Girl’s school to help encourage girls to pursue a career in science. The pupils have visited the CI for a tour around the building to see the facilities and hear one of my tutorials as well as a brief talk by Dr. Suzana Hadjur about her career and research. I’m proud to see that the Athena SWAN SAT have included feedback from this visit in the 2014 submission.

Being a young Egyptian woman who has now lived in this multicultural city for 4 years, I feel that the skills I have gained from living abroad alone, for the first time in my life and during my studies, have helped me develop personally and professionally. The exposure to colleagues from different nationalities has enhanced my understanding of the importance of diversity and tolerance. My PhD is in a field that is completely different from my background education in Pharmacy and has required learning many new techniques and skills, but with the constant guidance of my colleagues and supervisor I have been able to quickly develop and grow as a scientist and researcher and this time has been an essential milestone in my career development path. (513 words)