

Webinar: Update on Athena SWAN Review, Extensions and Renewals

8th June 2020

Sally Baden, Gender Equality and
Athena SWAN Policy Adviser, EDU

Catherine Goodwin, Planning and
Equality Manager, SSD



Introduction and purpose of session

- To outline the direction of travel of “Athena SWAN 4.0” post Review
- To clarify the process for extension applications and given pointers on extending action plans
- To outline and answer questions about the Renewals process (from November 2020)
- To gather concerns and questions to put back to Advance HE

Athena SWAN Review Outcomes

High level indications of 'direction of travel' at this stage plus:

- Initial responses to the 41 recommendations of the Review.
- Details on how to apply for extension of current awards from 4-5 years.

Next steps:

- Full details of "Transformation Plan" and changes in requirements **beyond November 2020** by the end year.
- Transitional period expected at least to April 2021?
- Opportunities for consultation on some key areas
- Advance HE *'will work with members to ensure their efforts to advance gender equality are not negatively affected by this process'*.

Main changes

1. AS Principles
2. Revisions to Award Criteria
3. Data requirements and Sources
4. Submission, assessment and feedback processes
5. Member services, engagement and governance

1. Updated Athena SWAN principles

Clear

Gender recognized 'as a spectrum'

Stronger focus on intersectionality

Expansion to Professional, Technical and Operational (PTO) directorates

Institutions need to recognize 'work' on AS

Less clear

How this will translate into data requirements

How plans should incorporate intersectionality

Details of process for PTOs

Expectations re EDI governance structure

Timeframe for developing integrated Charter

Existing Athena SWAN Principles

1. Recognise talents of all
2. Advance gender equality
3. Recognise disciplinary differences
4. Tackle the gender pay gap
5. Remove obstacles
6. Address short-term contracts
7. Tackle discrimination against trans people
8. Demonstrate senior commitment
9. Make structural and cultural changes
10. Consider intersectionality

2. Revisions to award criteria

Clear

Differentiation of Institutional and Departmental awards

Maintain 3 tier system

Progressive approach:

Bronze : 'entry level' – upgrade expected / encouraged in 5 years

Silver: 'hallmark of good practice'

Gold: excellence and supporting development in the sector.

Less clear

Abolish requirement that application for Institutional silver gold requires there to be departments with silver/ gold: to be reviewed

Awards only downgraded or removed when little /no evidence of progress against plans

3. Data requirements and sources

Clear

Streamlined data requirements
Develop clear criteria for/
introduce mandatory dataset

Less clear

Nature of mandatory dataset
and online portal - to pilot with
HESA, JISC...?

Additional, internal data requirements

Potential mandatory
departmental culture
survey. Questions:

*institutions already have surveys
whether focused on gender or
wider 'culture' issues.*

4. Submission, review and feedback processes

Clear

Support for more joint applications

Online applications process

Renewals focus on progress against AP, new developments, updated AP

No blueprint for action plans:
optional template to be provided

Less clear

More submission rounds
through year?

Quicker and more direct
panel feedback

Early submission (requires extra
payment?)

Peer review panelist system replaced
with 'expert panels'

5. AS member services, engagement and governance

Clear

More Advance HE guidance especially to first time applicants

New plans for member survey / annual feedback

No agreement

Governance Committee to advise Advance HE Board on AS /

Advance HE will maintain existing EDI Committee and Peer Review Quality Committee reporting to Board

Less clear

Programme of support to panel chairs and panellists

Optional departmental 'mid award' feedback service (fee paying)

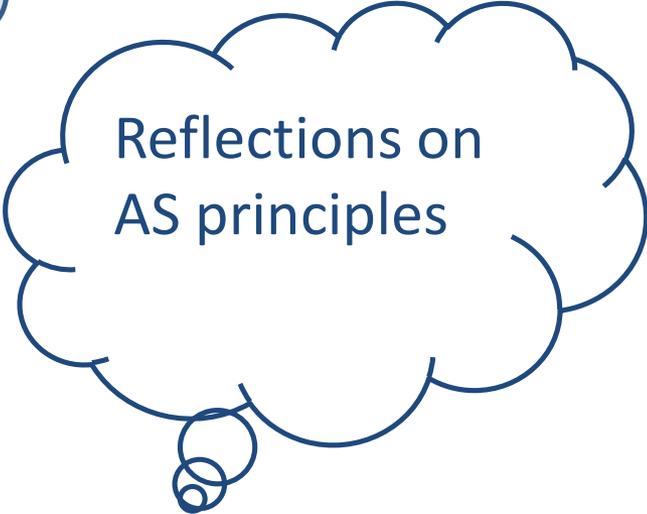
Full review of Charter every 5 years

Enhancing 'voice of members' in AS.

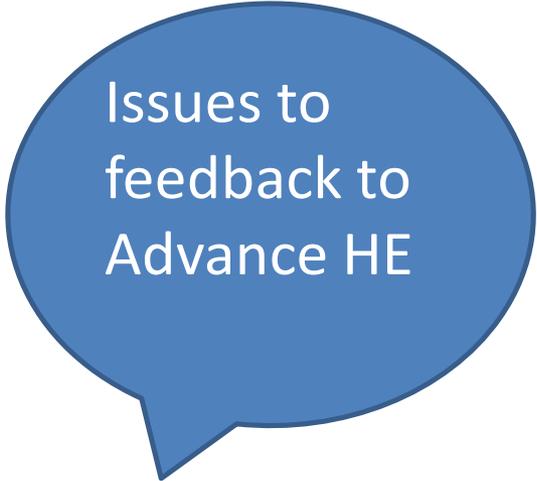
Questions and discussion



Clarification
questions?



Reflections on
AS principles



Issues to
feedback to
Advance HE

Extensions – existing award holders

- Award due to expire April 2020:
 - Already have an extension until Nov 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic.
- Award due to expire November 2020 onward:
 - Awards may be extended by one year on request.
 - Action plan should be extended by one year and put on website.
 - Letter should be written to Advance HE, confirming that the department will continue to uphold the Charter principles, and address gender equality through the extended action plan.
 - Letter should be sent as soon as possible, once action plan has been extended, and at latest two months before award expiry.
 - Only extensions of one year are granted, but applicants may apply before the year is up, at the earlier application deadline, so long as they notify of their intention to submit in the usual way.

Extensions – future applications

- Application submitted in April/Nov 2020
 - Valid for 5 years (i.e. until April/Nov 2025)
 - On receipt of the award departments will be asked to ensure that the action plan spans 5 years, extending it if it does not already.
 - No further action required.
- Application submitted in April 2021 and beyond
 - Valid for 5 years.
 - Applicants are required to submit an action plan covering five years as part of their application.

Covid-19

- All applications submitted in April / Nov 2020
 - A 500-word extension to the word limit to account for this additional narrative on factors relating to the pandemic – can be used across the submission as appropriate.
 - Advance HE encourage Self-Assessment Teams to reflect on the possible impacts of Covid-19 on gender equality in their context and consider adapting action plans as necessary.

Extending Action Plans (1)

- Action plans intended as 'living documents' to be reviewed /updated annually
- Submissions report against 'latest' version of action plan
- Departments will have different approaches - so no 'blueprint' for extending plans

Extending Action Plans (2)

Consider high-level stocktake of progress to identify:

1. Areas where progress is currently largely 'on track'. **Maintain** and:
 - consider extending timeline;
 - and/or adjust targets to account for extra year
2. Areas of actual or likely delay; or where progress to date is limited:
First, decide if still priority, relevant and feasible; if not, **remove** but document clear justification. If yes, consider and **adjust**:
 - Can actions be more clearly defined, or strengthened?
 - Do timelines, and/or responsibilities need adjusting?
 - Are there resourcing issues to address?
3. Areas of where progress can or needs to be **accelerated**
 - new initiatives not foreseen in original planning
 - Important mitigating actions?

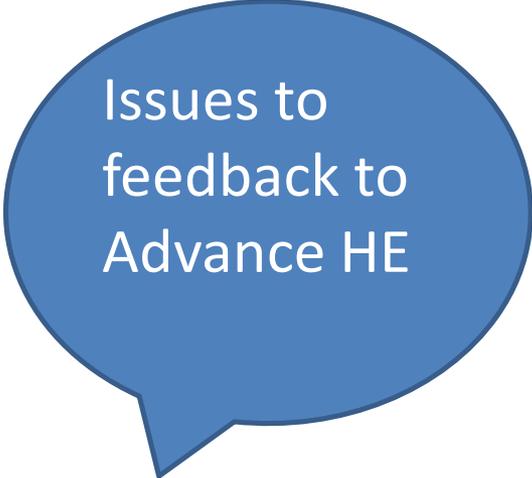
Extending Action Plans (3)

- How do major changes to external or internal context affect priorities
- What if any new initiatives/developments need to be incorporated in our plan?

Questions and discussion



Clarification
questions?



Issues to
feedback to
Advance HE

New Renewals Process

- For renewing an award at the same level
- For applications from November 2020
- Compulsory
 - but once an award-holder has successfully renewed their award using the renewal process, they are required to use the standard application process at the point of their next submission (even if applying for an award at the same level).
- Outcomes
 - Renewal
 - Unsuccessful – Year's Grace extension to current award

New Renewals Process: Differences

- Overall word limit: 6000 (rather than 10,500/12,000)
- Standard dataset does not need to be submitted, no requirement to present 3/5 years data, but such data will need to be considered by the SAT, and presented in the submission where appropriate to support the evaluation of progress against the previous action plan.
- Criteria: emphasis on:
 - Organisational infrastructure in place
 - **Progress** on previous action plan
 - **Learning demonstrated**
 - **Key priorities** identified for future

Renewals process: structure of application form

Section	Criteria to be demonstrated	Subsections	Recommended word count	Notes/Data requirements
1. Introduction to department and self-assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an organisational structure is in place to carry the action plan forward and continue the self-assessment process 	Letter of endorsement from the head of department	500	
		Description of the department	500	
		The self-assessment process	1500	
2. Evaluation of progress against the previous action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> progress has been made on the previous action plan learning has been demonstrated from the evaluation of progress 	Previous Action Plan - rated R A G	<i>No additional commentary</i>	Use qualitative and quantitative data to evidence statements.
		Progress report	2000	
3. Future priorities and action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> key priorities have been appropriately identified, to direct future action a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) action plan has been provided, which addresses priorities. 	Current self-assessment and future priorities	1500	Use qualitative and quantitative data to evidence statements.
		Future Action plan		Same format as standard Action Plan.

Previous
Action
Plan

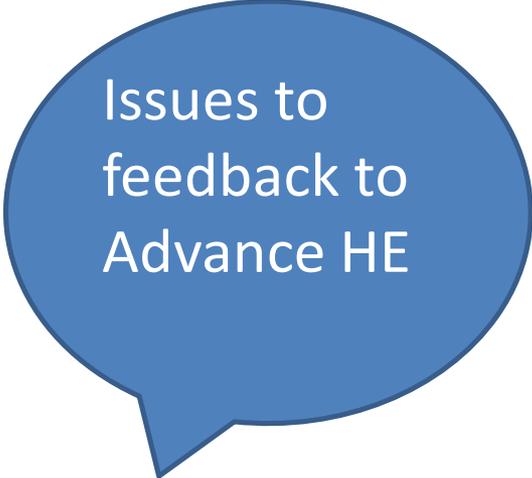
Progress report
narrative

New Action
Plan

Questions and discussion



Clarification
questions?



Issues to
feedback to
Advance HE

Additional Resources

[Athena SWAN Review](#)

[Advance HE response to the AS Review recommendations](#)

Guidance on [extending awards to 5 years](#)

[Athena SWAN renewals process](#) including webinar.

[Advance HE Connect network](#) is available to staff of member institutions, with specialist forum on Athena SWAN