GETTING AHEAD ON GENDER EQUALITY

University of Reading Athena SWAN Highlights 2016

We are delighted to report that we have heard today – 6th October 2016 – that the University has successfully renewed its Athena SWAN Bronze Award. This award recognises many examples of good practice and progress across the University in supporting women in our Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subject areas, and our progress against the action plan that was part of our last submission in 2011. The award also commits the University to an action plan for 2016-19 agreed earlier this year, this action plan moving beyond the traditional focus of Athena SWAN on STEM and on academic staff, to encompass all staff across the University, whether in academic or other roles, and to push beyond STEM to all our subject areas.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

We are particularly proud of our success in several areas:

- We have increased both the number and percentage of female professors since 2010/11; 31.3% of our professoriate is now female, outperforming the sector, the Russell group, and – our closest comparator – the former 1994 Group. Indeed we have more than doubled the gap between us and the sector over that time. In STEM schools specifically we have gone from below sector-average professorial female representation to outperform the sector. The large increase in numbers of female professors reflects actions taken to make the promotion process more transparent, to specifically emphasise and value a much wider range of contributions and to introduce a formal way to report personal circumstances influencing progression.

- Our gender balance for non-professorial roles has matched the sector university-wide, and exceeded our comparator groups.

- We have introduced career development and promotion training workshops for our early career research staff, and new promotion procedures as part of Rewarding Excellence, leading to a dramatic increase in the numbers of both men and women promoted from Research Grade 6 to Grade 7 (1 woman, 7 men in the 4 years 2008-2011, 10 men and 11 women in the subsequent 4 promotion rounds).

- All job adverts are now normally advertised as available on a part-time or job share basis.

- We have committed to supporting those taking periods of maternity or shared parental leave with dedicated personal and career development funds once they return, as well as covering the full costs of replacing that member of staff during the leave period, so that parental leave does not negatively affect teams.
• Our Heads of School can now see at a glance via a state-of-the-art data dashboard, any gender gaps in pay and promotion of staff, progression and attainment of students.

• We have a successful Edith Morley Annual Lecture, and women are well-represented as speakers at our prestigious and well attended Public Lecture Series.

• We have supported over 200 women through the Springboard development programme and over 30 through the Aurora leadership programme.

• The female percentage on Council (our executive governing body) has risen to 34.5% in 2015/16, exceeding the University’s 2020 target, and heading towards the 40-60% target advocated in Women Count 2016.

• Unlike the sector as a whole, University of Reading had no significant differences in populations submitted and non-submitted to REF with respect to gender at the institutional level, and Reading had a much higher submission rate than the sector overall.

• Our staff, both men and women, are contributing to the national agenda on women in science, and diversity in Higher Education, for example, the Royal Society’s Parent, Carer, Scientist campaign featured 3 women from Reading.

OUR 2016–2019 ACTION PLAN

Going forward, our action plan aims to build on the progress to date – for example to reach our target of 40% of either gender in the professoriate by 2020 – and to extend good practice from STEM schools across the whole organisation, and so that we progress gender equality for all our staff across the University. For example, we will:

• Ensure that our key University committees are at least 30% of either gender by 2020 and revise the appointment process and structure of our Executive Board so that it is more diverse by 2020.

• Celebrate and highlight women working across the University – and our staff more broadly - to the outside world via an online “Faces of Reading” project.

• Based on latest industry research, we will scrutinise the wording of job advertisements and person descriptions across the University to remove gendered terms that may discourage some applicants from applying.

• Hold Schools and Functions accountable for achieving against gender targets and expect them to appoint a Diversity Champion with time allocated in the workload model.

• Audit existing workload models and work towards accepted general principles for a fair, transparent allocation method across all academic schools

• Develop better training on unconscious bias and gender stereotyping for all our staff and students, with particular focus on line managers, Heads of Schools and Functions, and Research Division Leaders.

• Normalise flexible working and parental leave via a highly visible, top level endorsed web page and campaign, and support managers to support staff working flexibly.

• Support our Aurora graduates via a range of activities back at Reading.

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