

**Athena Swan Charter SAT**  
**Minutes of meeting held on**  
**1<sup>st</sup> December at 9:30am in Room 114**



**School of Geography**

**Present: Alison Blunt (Chair), Lucy Diggins (minutes), Anna Dulic-Sills, Janice Garry, Al James, Ashok Kumar, Andrew Loveland, Cathy McIlwaine, Francis O'Shea, Olivia Sheringham**

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### **1. Apologies**

Kate Heppell

### **2. Introduction**

FOS was asked about his PhD experience and advised his office was gender balanced and all seemed to be allocated an equal amount of demonstrating. PhD students here are able to do CILT qualifications if they aim to continue with teaching in academia. Some universities have shown a trend of supporting teaching and qualifications in a possible attempt to stop people leaving academia due to competition.

It was pointed out that some job families may have been wrongly assigned upon initial assessment of the data.

### **3. Data Set 1A – All staff (including PS) by career path**

The group agreed that Data Set 1a showed a fairly equal gender balance. CMc suggested that it could possibly be due to a former employee who was very encouraging to female members of staff, both academic and PS, and that the School has remained an encouraging environment for women since. AB added that Heads of School have generally been supportive of gender balances and CMc said that there is good retention as people are not driven away as the environment is supportive. For example, there is an on-site nursery; AB and CMc have both been supported by being allowed to work part-time; there is support for maternity leave and those returning from it.

AB suggested it may be interesting to further split the data and look at Human Geography and Physical Geography staff. AB advised that she will speak with the RGS at an upcoming meeting to see if there is a benchmark figure for women. **ACTION AB.**

### **4. Data Set 1B – Academic by career path and grade**

AJ stated that we support students making the transition from PhD to academic roles, although not necessarily taking them at QMUL. CMc added that support can include advice on getting published and where to look for post docs.

A paper has recently come out of the House of Commons which has said that post doc culture should change as the current culture of being expected to move around is detrimental to families and finances. The RCUK are starting to support this initiative. Leverhulme Early Career grants (completion within 5 years of taking Viva) do not seem to take maternity leave into account.

We can try and coordinate to advertise all vacancies at once, so couples in different fields can apply for jobs at the same institution. AB added that the School encourages people to work from home if they can and it suits them and this is often accommodated in the teaching schedule.

The ECU Geography and Environmental Studies benchmark is 37.2% for female academic staff. Benchmarking against the Russell Group should not be done as their figures are generally low and it is considered an easy benchmark.

It is not just about considerations around childcare, but also around people who are carers for family members.

## **5. Data Set 2A – fixed-term**

Staff coming to end of fixed term contracts - ADS advised that sometimes they end because the position was only funded for that amount of time. AB said that all staff are encouraged to split their time as 40% research, 40% teaching and 20% admin. AL added that all fixed-term staff are encouraged to meet with him at an early stage to discuss future funding. It was put forward that the writing of grants is often focused on expertise but more junior staff should also be considered.

## **6. Data Set 2B – part-time**

ADS and JG discussed meeting to fill in some gaps in the part-time staff data. **ACTION ADS AND JG.** Questions were asked whether these staff are due to funding limitations or flexible working. It was advised that it should be made clear that staff may be able to use the facilities still if working part-time e.g. to write grant applications.

## **7. Data Set 3 – leavers; 3A – staff turnover**

Pointed out that staff leaving may be due to the end of fixed-term contracts; this data can be removed to look at staff who leave by choice.

## **8. Data Set 4 – staff academic recruitment raw data; A – total appointments; B – total academic appointments; C – total research appointments**

It was noted that a common theme can be seen that males are more successful at being shortlisted. Consider the training given to panels – are they trained and does this training include equality and diversity? AB advised that chairs of interview panels are given unconscious bias training; Recommended that this training is given to all staff as it can apply to many areas including grant writing.

## **9. Data Set 5 – raw promotions data**

JG will provide breakdown between successful and unsuccessful applications for promotions. **ACTION JG.** Promotion paths for researchers - these should be available for the award e.g. different levels of research fellow. The impact of maternity/paternity leave on how long people sit in a grade before promotion. CMc asked if could add that senior

staff meet to discuss individual progress to see if staff are at a point where they should be applying for promotion.

### **10. Data Set 6 – paternity leave**

Figures for this were considered to be low and it was agreed that maternity/paternity leave must be recorded correctly.

### **11. Data Set 7 – School committees**

It was suggested that we also consider who the chair is of the various committees listed, and CMc advised that the role of chair is fairly gender balanced. AB added that as well as considering gender balance there is also a balance of Human Geography and Physical Geography staff.

### **12. Date of next meeting**

**To be confirmed**

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#### **ACTIONS:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
2	Provision of demonstrating data	ADS
2	HR data – queries and data capture	ADS, JG
3	Student to staff pipeline data	JG
3	RGS benchmark	AB
6	Add data to part-time staff section	ADS, JG
9	Breakdown of successful/unsuccessful promotion applications	JG