

Mission Statement

The Gender Equality Steering Group (GESG) aims to advance gender equality across the University, focusing on improving the representation, progression, and experience of women, while taking a broad and inclusive view of gender equity that considers how gender-related barriers affect everyone in our community. The Group leads an institution-wide approach to identifying and addressing systemic and structural barriers and is committed to upholding the principles of the Athena Swan Charter.

Responsibilities

- Members of the Gender Equality Steering Group share collective responsibility to:
- Evaluate and influence University policies, processes, and practices to maintain focus on sustained gender equality and institutional change.
- Develop and promote initiatives that advance gender equity and inclusion, considering how gender intersects with other protected characteristics.
- Uphold the Athena Swan Charter principles and integrate them into institutional culture, strategy, and decision-making.
- Oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Athena Swan Action Plan, reviewing progress through data, evaluation, and insight.
- Consider School and Faculty gender equality or Athena Swan updates to support shared learning, offer institutional level insight, and identify any cross-university themes or barriers.
- Communicate progress, learning, and impact within their areas of influence to support wider engagement and commitment across the University.
- Take a systematic approach to identifying barriers to gender equality and develop evidence-based solutions relevant to the Group's remit.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of actions undertaken to ensure they deliver measurable and sustainable change, adapting the action plan in response to findings.
- Act as visible champions of gender equality within their areas of influence, modelling inclusive leadership and practice.
- Engage with Gender Equality leads within Faculties and Schools to oversee and advise on gender equality work
- Support the Chair to periodically review membership and recruitment, ensuring fair allocation of actions and representation of key perspectives.

Attendees/ Membership

The ideal composition of the GESG will include cross-representation of roles, functions, and lived experience. Periodic reviews of membership will consider which roles are essential for the current phase of the work, as well as ensuring sufficient representation across the following areas:

- Gender equality expertise and advocacy
- Diverse representation, including staff and students from different protected groups
- Cross-section of functions: Academic, Faculty representatives, Professional, technical and support staff, and data analysts (considering a range of roles and grades)
- Senior leaders
- Staff networks and student representation, including the voices of women and minority genders across different backgrounds
- Charter experience (e.g. Athena Swan or related equality charter work)

Membership should, as far as possible, reflect the diversity and composition of the institution, ensuring representation across genders and intersectional identities.

In practice, membership may include (for example):

- Associate Dean for Culture, Equality and Inclusion (Chair) Chair should be a senior leader in a position of influence to support the advancement of gender equality across the institution
- Assistant Director of HR (Culture, Equality and Inclusion)
- Athena Swan leads from Schools engaged in the Athena Swan process
- EDI Planning Officer
- CMA representative
- Lead EDI Consultant (Gender)
- HR/Organisational Development Representative
- Data analyst
- Early Career Researcher representative
- PhD student representative
- UG/PGT Student representative

The Chair may invite additional members or establish working groups on an ad hoc basis to advance specific areas of work.

Membership will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains diverse, representative, and aligned with institutional priorities. Membership will be coordinated by the Chair in conjunction with the EDI Lead (Gender), and recruitment will aim to ensure broad and diverse representation across academic and professional services functions, staff networks, and student groups. Calls for expressions of interest may be used to identify members where appropriate. Membership reviews will consider both institutional priorities and the current phase of the gender equality action plan.

Term of Office

Members will normally serve a term of three years, renewable subject to agreement between the member and Chair. Membership will be reviewed annually to ensure continued relevance to the Group's priorities and balance of representation.

The Chair (or Co-Chair, if applicable) will normally serve for a term of three years, with a minimum commitment of one year. Terms of office may be adjusted in line with institutional needs or major Athena Swan submission milestones.

Delegation of Authority/ Governance

The Gender Equality Steering Group does not have executive authority. Its role is to advise, inform, and evaluate progress on the University's Gender Equality Action Plan and Athena Swan activity. The Group reports to the University's EDI Board and provides updates, recommendations, and evidence to support institutional EDI priorities and statutory equality duties.

Frequency and Duration/ Working Methods

The Group will normally meet three times per academic year and more frequently when preparing for new Athena Swan submissions or renewals at institutional level. Meetings will typically last around 90 minutes.

Administrative support, including meeting coordination, scheduling, and minute-taking, will be provided by the EDI Team. Minutes will be circulated to members following each meeting.

The Chair will develop the agenda in consultation with the EDI Lead (Gender) and relevant stakeholders. Members may propose agenda items in advance of meetings.

Guest speakers or contributors may be invited at the Chair's discretion to inform specific agenda items or share good practice.