



# Athena SWAN

University of Limerick, March 2015

Dr Ruth Gilligan – Athena SWAN Adviser

Charter for women in science

# Equality Challenge Unit



- = Established in 2001
- = Promotes equality for staff and students in higher education
- = Evidence-based approach
- = ECU's equality charter marks: catalysts for change



# Athena SWAN



- Recognition scheme of excellence in women's employment in STEMM
- 2005: 10 founder members
- 2015: 124 members
- Institutional and departmental awards

**STEMM =**  
Science  
Technology  
Engineering  
Maths  
Medicine

# Athena SWAN awards – University



## **Bronze** – *64 Bronze universities*

- 🏠 self-assessment & analysis
- 🏠 identify issues
- 🏠 put in place a solid foundation



## **Silver** – *5 Silver universities*

- 🏠 activities well underway
- 🏠 evidence of progress and achievement
- 🏠 majority of STEMM departments to hold AS awards

# Athena SWAN awards – Department



## **Bronze** – *203 Bronze departments*

- 🏆 identified challenges
- 🏆 planned activities for the future



## **Silver** – *96 Silver departments*

- 🏆 ongoing activity
- 🏆 evidence of impact

## **Gold** – *7 Gold departments*

- 🏆 significant record of activity and impact
- 🏆 beacons for gender equality, Athena SWAN and good practice

# Athena SWAN Ireland



📌 Official launch on 5 February 2015

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# The benefits of Athena SWAN



- Highlights areas to make positive changes
- Provides a focal point for existing informal good practices
- Increases awareness of career progression issues
- Encourages increased transparency
- Demonstrates good working environment to job applicants



# Athena SWAN Evaluation Report 2014



- Evidence of sustainable change
- Women – improved visibility, increased self-confidence, enhanced leadership skills
- All staff – positive differences in career satisfaction, development opportunities
- Administrative and technical staff report a greater sense of belonging



“[Athena SWAN is] the most effective lever for change I have come across in 12 years of equality work.”

– Institutional champion



# Reputation and support

- Widely recognised and well regarded within and beyond the UK
- Anecdotal evidence of link between award and increases in research income and interest from high-quality job candidates
- In 2011 and 2012, the UK Department of Health linked funding of large-scale research hubs to an Athena SWAN silver award
- Research Councils UK (RCUK) set out a Statement of Expectations for Equality and Diversity for those receiving funding



# Future of Athena SWAN



Expanding in the UK in Nov 2015 to include arts, humanities, social science, business and law departments



Will explore equality considerations for men and transgender staff as well as women

Will cover professional and support staff, honorary staff and atypical staff as well as academics

First submission of Irish HEIs **30 April 2015!**

# Further information available



## Website

[www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charter-marks/athena-swan/](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charter-marks/athena-swan/)



## Athena SWAN handbook

<http://ecu.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Athena-SWAN-handbook-April-2014-v2.pdf>

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