Athena Swan Silver Action Plan University of Limerick, CSIS-Lero
Overview of action groups 2.1: Overview of the department and its context 2.2: Governance and recognition of EDI work 2.3: Embedding policy, practice and supports to advance professional, managerial and support staff careers 2.4: Evaluating culture, inclusion and belonging

Priority key	Actions
Priority 1: EDI activity	1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.1.5, 2.1.7, 2.4.4, 2.4.5
Priority 2: Career development	2.1.8, 2.1.9, 2.1.10, 2.1.11, 2.1.13, 2.2.1, 2.2.4
Priority 3: Teaching and learning environment	2.2.2, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.6

Focus	Actions
Gender Equality (GE)	1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.9, 2.1.10, 2.1.12, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 3.1.1
Additional Equality Grounds (AEG)	2.1.5, 2.1.6, 2.1.7, 2.1.8, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.4.5, 2.4.6, 2.4.7, 2.4.8, 2.4.9

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SAP 1.1.1	Ensure that members of SAT are representative of CSIS-Lero gender balance (continuation of BAP 1.1b).	Rotate and expand SAT membership.	Call issued to CSIS-Lero every 2 years, requesting staff and students to participate in AS SAT.	Biannual December 2026, December 2028	Chair AS SAT	Membership changes by 40% minimum every 2 years. SAT gender balance reflects department gender balance.

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SAP 1.1.2	Establish a formal annual review of the AS action plan (continuation of BAP 1.2).	A mechanism for recording regular (annual) activities and holding datasets is needed.	Hold a formal dedicated SAT meeting to review implementation of the action plan over the previous year, as well as any amendments or proposed amendments to the plan. Prepare an annual implementation report for presentation to the S&E AS SAT.	Annually in December	Chair AS SAT	Action plan has been reviewed at a SAT meeting annually. 80% of actions have been completed as scheduled. Review has been adopted at a full departmental meeting. Implementation report has been presented to the S&E AS SAT.
SAP 1.1.3	Ensure that adequate resources are available to successfully implement the action plan.	Funding is required in order to undertake the key AS actions identified (continued from BAP 1.3).	Allocate staff to EDI initiatives to value of €10,000. Seek additional grant funding as necessary. Incorporate AS activities into WAM.	December 2028	HoD; LD	Budget has been secured. AS activities continue to be incorporated into CSIS WAM.
SAP 1.1.4	Update CSIS-Lero personnel on action plan progress.	This is to ensure that all members of CSIS-Lero are aware of actions and our plans over the next four years (continued from BAP 1.4).	Present CSIS-Lero AS actions at bimonthly		Chair AS SAT	All CSIS-Lero staff get bimonthly

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			department meetings.			updates on AS actions.
SAP 1.1.5	Ensure Athena Swan actions are incorporated into departmental objectives via the Quality Review.	There are concerns that AS actions could be obscured by actions that arise from the forthcoming Departmental Quality Review.	Ensure actions arising from the Silver AS application are incorporated into departmental changes in the forthcoming Departmental Quality Review.	2024-26	Chair of CSIS Quality team	AS actions are incorporated into actions resulting from the AS Quality Review, ensuring that AS actions are not overlooked.
SAP 1.1.6	Improve gender balance on Lero Advisory Board and Executive Committee	Lero's Advisory Board (33%F) and Executive Committee (23%F) is male-dominated.	Identifying female leaders and working to promote them into leadership roles.	2025-26	LD	Increased representation of females on Lero Advisory Board and Executive Committee
Actions from section 2.1: Overview of the department and its context						
SAP 2.1.1	Continue CSIS-Lero outreach to improve female enrolment in computing subjects, with a focus on LM174 Bachelor/Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.	Female recruitment for LM174 Bachelor/Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning at 7% is well below the national average of 19.4% (2022/23). It is important for second-level school students to see female role-models.	Implement introductory Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) content as part of CodePlus which is designed to	December 2025	CodePlus activity leader; Lero EPE program manager	Gender appropriate AI/ML content has been added to CodePlus activity. Engage at least 1 female CSIS

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		CSIS-Lero outreach program has been successful to date, and so we will continue to work towards increased female enrolments.	engage female transition-year students in computing subjects. Engage female student volunteer(s) to ensure balanced gender representation in the delivery of this content. Successfully apply for grants to support the continuation of the CSIS-Lero outreach program.	January 2026 January 2028		student to participate in CodePlus AI/ML. 2 grants received to support CSIS-Lero outreach program Increase in the number of females engaging in LM174 by 10% each year.
SAP 2.1.2	Assess the factors giving rise to differences between female and male UG degree outcomes.	Data indicates that female students are more likely to receive a higher level or award than male students. (Table 2.1.13)	Investigate why women perform better than men in UG courses.	December 2026	Equality Officer	Investigation completed. Future actions identified if relevant.
			Apply changes based upon	December 2028	HoD	Relevant new actions are created

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			results of departmental investigation, creating further AS actions if required.			and implementation started.
SAP 2.1.3	Develop a better understanding of fluctuations in female engagement in individual PGT courses.	MSc courses tend to fluctuate from year to year. Longer-term monitoring of enrolment might allow us to market courses to particular groups.	Review data to identify the barriers and facilitators which influence enrolment choices. Identify actions which can be taken to support marketing of PGT courses.	January 2026 January 2027	PGT course directors	Course-specific barriers and facilitators are identified. Actions identified.
SAP 2.1.4	Increase the percentage of females enrolling on the PDEng degree.	PDEng is an industry-based programme, with 31%F registered. Potential students are reviewed by a course panel whose gender balance is 33%F.	Increase female representation on PDEng course panel increases to a minimum of 40%. Ensure marketing materials reflect a minimum of 40% gender balance.	January 2026 December 2026	PDEng course director	PDEng course panel has minimum representation of 40%F. PDEng marketing materials demonstrate 40% gender balanced representation.

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						Female PDEng increases to 40% minimum.
SAP 2.1.5. A	Increase the number of applications for postgraduate positions from underrepresented groups, including women.	There are currently 51 full-time PGR research students, 24%F (12) in CSIS-Lero. We would like to increase the number of women.	Increase the visibility of underrepresented groups in CSIS-Lero PhD recruitment campaigns.	January 2027 January 2027	Marketing group Chair Chair AS SAT	2 PhD case studies from underrepresented persons made available on CSIS-Lero websites. 40%F increase in the number of underrepresented persons (including women) enrolled as PGRs each year.
SAP 2.1.5. B	Develop a better understanding of the factors influencing applications for research positions from underrepresented groups, including women.	There is a lack of data regarding applications for research positions from underrepresented groups including women.	Conduct a study investigating the factors influencing females and underrepresented groups making applications for researcher positions.	January 2027	Chair AS SAT	Increased applicaitons for research positions from underrepresented groups, including women.
SAP 2.1.6	Ensure a level playing field for those accessing funded PhD opportunities.	Reach of information regarding PhD opportunities can be restricted to an academic's personal network.	Introduce mandatory publicising of	December 2025	Chair AS SAT	All PhD funding is advertised on CSIS-Lero websites.

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			funded PhD opportunities on CSIS-Lero websites.			
SAP 2.1.7	Increase CSIS student engagement in supporting school-age students' understanding of STEM subject areas.	To engage school-age students in STEM subject areas with gender-balanced student role models with a view to increasing their interest later in life.	Create a CSIS ambassador role, held by a student. CSIS ambassador co-ordinates student volunteers to participate in departmental school outreach events run by CSIS-Lero and UL Access office.	September 2025	Equality Officer	CSIS ambassador appointed annually. CSIS ambassador becomes an AS SAT member. CSIS ambassador is supported to applied for PVA. CSIS ambassador has co-ordinated volunteers for a minimum of 3 events per year.
SAP 2.1.8	Create a 'Staff Career Development Officer' role within the AS SAT to support staff career development.	There is a need to support career development in CSIS-Lero. The post-holder would provide guidance on HR training and development opportunities. (Sect. 2.2f)	Create a specific Staff Career Development Officer role.	March 2025	Chair AS SAT and HoD	Staff Career Development Officer role created within department.
SAP 2.1.9. A	Addressing barriers to female appointments at higher levels, by raising awareness of UL HR	While there are some encouraging signs regarding CSIS-Lero female researchers applying for positions (Sect. 2.2b 2), at higher	Organise HR seminars and drop-in sessions	Annually from		One seminar held annually.

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	policies and their impact on progression.	levels there seems to be an issue with appointments and promotions.	to include UL HR policies, such as mentorship, training, PDRS, portfolio review, appointment and promotions.	January 2025	Staff Career Development Officer	Minimum of 2 drop-in sessions held annually.
SAP 2.1.9.B	Support female applicants to reduce barriers for their appointment at higher levels.	While there are some encouraging signs regarding CSIS-Lero female researchers applying for positions (Sect. 2.2b 2), at higher levels there seems to be an issue with appointments and promotions.	For each appointment advertised at higher level positions, academic or administrative, create a panel of women, national and international, to review role information and applications regarding that position.	From June 2025	Chair AS SAT and HoD	All appointment and promotion applicants have had the opportunity to have their portfolios reviewed internally. Minimum of 2 women per year attaining AssocProfA, SRF, Professor or Full Professor positions through appointment or promotion.

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SAP 2.1.10	Increase the number of female academics within CSIS-Lero.	There is a need to increase the number of females who apply for academic positions within CSIS-Lero from 13% to 30% (similar to applications for research positions).	For each appointment advertised at early career academic level, create a panel of women, national and international, to be sent information about that position. Showcase the achievements and contributions of female researchers and promote positive role models.	From June 2025	Chair AS SAT and HoD	In 4 years, increase in the number of female academics and researchers within CSIS-Lero from 25% to 30%. All CSIS-Lero events featured prominent women as speakers.
SAP 2.1.11	Provide better support for PMSS career development.	Increase the understanding of potential paths to PMSS career development and promotion. The staff survey demonstrated that people do not understand these. (Sect. 2.3e)	Organise HR seminars and drop-in sessions to include UL HR policies, such as mentorship, training, PDRS, CV review, appointment and job evaluation.	Annually from January 2025	Staff Career Development Officer	Minimum 20% PMSS have progressed in their careers. 100% have undertaken PDRS training.

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						At least 80% completed annual PDRS review.
SAP 2.1.12	Increase the representation of female staff in the technical grades.	Technical staff positions do not come up often in CSIS-Lero. An available position was filled by a woman in 2024 (first ever in a technical post in CSIS-Lero). However, when such a position arises, we would like to ensure that women take the opportunity to apply.	For each appointment advertised for technical staff, create a panel of women, national and international, to be sent information about that position. This should include CSIS graduates.	From June 2025	Chair AS SAT and HoD	If a position arises, a minimum of 25% applicants are female.
SAP 2.1.13	Improve the mobility/ progression of academics with contracts of indefinite duration.	There is a lack of mobility/progression for CID academics. University Teacher role does not have the option of promotion.	Discuss the possibility of introducing University Teacher progression at S&E management meetings every six months.	From January 2025	HoD	Provision has been made to support University Teacher progression.
Actions from section 2.2: Embedding policy, practice and supports to advance academic and research careers						
SAP 2.2.1	Increase female representation at Professor level.	There is a lack of female representation at Full Professor level. While this is currently at 33%, we are concerned that there is no female currently at AssocProfA or Prof level.	Form a SALI team in CSIS to develop an application for submission.	When SALI call is announced	HoD	SALI application submitted

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SAP 2.2.2	Improve the ratio of females in Lero PI and FI positions.	There are 29%F PIs and 18%F Fis in Lero.	Providing support, for example, mentorship and teaching buy-out, for women who are applying for grants in Lero, as successful applications will allow them to become FIs. Providing CV review for senior women to apply for TÉRI PI status.	2024/25 onwards	HoD; Lero Deputy Director Lero PIs	At least 5 female FIs have been appointed within Lero. At least 2Fs have applied for PI status.
SAP 2.2.3	Improve transparency and information around promotion, including related policies.	There is dissatisfaction (a lack of information and transparency) regarding feedback and current promotion policies (Sect. 2.2d).	HoD to raise the issue of dissatisfaction with feedback following unsuccessful promotion applications. Organise HR seminars and drop-in sessions to include UL HR	June 2025 Annually, from January 2025	HoD Staff Career Development Officer	Staff survey to indicate 50% improvement in satisfaction.

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			policies on promotion.			
SAP 2.2.4	Encourage academic and research staff to complete PDRS training and review.	Only 65% staff members are engaging in the PDRS and so potentially miss out on any promotion-related benefits related to such.	Organise career development seminars which have a strong emphasis on the benefits of PDRS for individualised career planning.	Annually, from January 2026	Staff Career Development Officer	One seminar annually. 80% attendance at PDRS.
SAP 2.2.5	Through the PDRS, encourage more staff to take training opportunities, especially optional choices.	There is evidence that staff are engaging in 'required' (for new staff) career development & training, which is available, but less so optional courses such as 'grant writing'. A lack of training might limit career development.	PDRS reviewers make reviewees aware of the benefits of engagement with training opportunities, especially the optional choices, such as grant writing, PhD supervision training and excellence in teaching practices.	Annually, from January 2026	PDRS reviewers	Staff survey responses show awareness of benefits of engagement with training opportunities. 30% greater attendance at career development training and conferences.

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Actions from section 2.3: Embedding policy, practice and supports to advance professional, managerial and support staff careers						
SAP 2.3.1	Raise awareness of the Erasmus+ Staff Mobility scheme to bring people to CSIS-Lero and to have people travel to other universities.	It was identified that no CSIS-Lero staff member has ever benefited from job shadowing via the Erasmus+ Staff Mobility scheme. (Sect. 2.3e)	Organise information session on Erasmus+ Staff Mobility scheme.	Annually from January 2026	Staff Career Development Officer.	2 people (inwards / outwards). 50% have attended an information session.
Actions from section 2.4: Evaluating culture, inclusion and belonging						
SAP 2.4.1	Provide childcare at Lero Summit events.	To enable those with caring responsibilities to engage at the annual Lero Summit. This will help ensure those with caring responsibilities don't miss out on engaging in Lero activities and have equal access to developmental opportunities.	Ensure childcare provision e.g. facilities, childcare expenses, family rooms, at all future Lero Summit events.	From September 2025	Lero Director	Options for childcare are provided at annual Lero summit.
SAP 2.4.2	Use successful CSIS and Lero leaders as role models to showcase women's achievements.	As evidenced in the focus groups, successful female leaders have an important role to play in encouraging women and girls to pursue education and careers in STEM areas. (see quotes Sect. 2.4c 1)	Implement a strategy which showcases women's leadership achievements in CSIS-Lero throughout the year.	2024-2026	Marketing team	Minimum of 6 press releases per annum highlighting women's achievements in CSIS-Lero. Minimum of 10 web page articles per annum published

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						highlighting women's achievements in CSIS-Lero.
SAP 2.4.3	Integrate EDI topics into more modules to reach a wider audience.	While EDI topics are already considered across a number of taught modules (Sect. 2.4a 3), there is still significant scope to raise awareness across more of our courses in taught content.	A community of practice will be set up to assess and address the need for training or material for embedding EDI in teaching. Encourage the integration of EDI topics into more modules to reach a wider range of students across many subject areas.	January 2026	Chair AS SAT	Community of practice will meet 2 times per year. EDI training materials and case studies will be available to all CSIS-Lero staff. Minimum 80% of CSIS students will be exposed to EDI in their modules.
SAP 2.4.4	Award a prize for the best EDI Final-Year Project (FYP).	We need to encourage staff and students to become more aware of EDI. One way of doing this is to further encourage students to base their FYP on an EDI topic.	Solicit funding from industry which allows us to award a prize for the best EDI FYP annually.	April 2025	FYP Module Coordinator	Annual sponsored FYP prize implemented.

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SAP 2.4.5	Establish a CSIS-Lero staff EDI network to enable under-represented groups (including women) to discuss issues they face.	There is no staff platform for underrepresented groups in CSIS-Lero to discuss issues that face them specifically.	Implement twice-yearly half-day gatherings for a speaker, discussion and networking lunch where barriers to and successes of women in CSIS-Lero are highlighted.	Biannually from June 2026	AS SAT	Biannual EDI staff Network gathering organised for underrepresented groups to discuss relevant issues.
SAP 2.4.6	Establish a CSIS-Lero student EDI network to enable under-represented groups (including women) to discuss issues they face.	There is no student platform for underrepresented groups in CSIS-Lero to discuss issues that face them specifically.	Implement twice-yearly half-day gatherings for a speaker, discussion and networking lunch where students have the opportunity to discuss issues of interest to them.	Biannually from September	AS SAT – student member	Biannual EDI student Network gathering organised for underrepresented groups to discuss relevant issues.
SAP 2.4.7	Address issues for new starters.	Some new employees are missing out on important information and training during their induction process. The academic/ researcher staff survey indicated that 57% did not participate in the UL induction programme, the majority of whom (40%) stated that they were not informed.	Present all new starters with information pack developed in BAP 7.8. Add new starters to department	From December 2024 From December 2024	Department administrator Department administrator	Staff survey results show 80% satisfaction with the department induction process.

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			mailing lists immediately upon starting. Ensure all new starters attend the probation PDRS. Ensure all new starters attend Induction training given by HR. Continue to provide all new starters with a mentor (BAP 7.8).	From December 2024 From December 2024 From December 2024	HoD HoD HoD	
SAP 2.4.8	Ensure that PGR students who are teaching undertake dignity & respect training.	While there is training available for regular (contracted) staff relating to UL's Dignity & Respect policy, we need to ensure postgraduate teachers, possibly with less experience and potentially on temporary or short contracts, do not miss out on engaging with this important training. So that the workplace can be free of bullying and harassment, it is important that all staff are aware of the dignity & respect policy and how to deal with related problems, should they occur.	HoD to inform all PGRs who are teaching know that they must attend Dignity & Respect training. PGRs to inform HoD that they have attended Dignity & Respect training.	From September 2025	HoD PGRs	All PGRs who are teaching have completed Dignity & Respect training.

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SAP 2.4.9	Ensure that all in CSIS-Lero are informed about the leave to which they are entitled, thus providing support for those taking, or planning to take leave such as maternity, adoption or parental leave.	There is a lack of awareness, possibly more so for men, relating to current leave policies, including unpaid professional leave. Women are more likely to take leave than men. (Sect. 2.4c 5)	Schedule a leave information awareness session early annually, as part of a departmental staff meeting.	2024/25 onwards	Chair AS SAT	Staff survey indicates that 80% of those who wish to do so have availed of leave.
From BAP, not mentioned in previous SAP actions						
SAP 3.1.1	Promote CSIS UG courses to women in MSAC, DARE and HEAR groups.	Women in these groups have not been targeted by CSIS.	Guided by a similar initiative in UL Chemical Science department, publish case studies of female UGs who have previously entered CSIS courses via MSAC, DARE or HEAR.	2024/25	Course Directors	Minimum of one case study per programme published on the CSIS website