Athena SWAN Bronze department award application

Name of university: University of Nottingham

Department: School of Computer Science

Date of application: April 2013

Date of university Bronze and/or Silver SWAN award: awaiting outcome of a Silver SWAN award application

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Athena SWAN Bronze Department awards recognise that in addition to university-wide policies the department is working to promote gender equality and to address challenges particular to the discipline.

Not all institutions use the term ‘department’ and there are many equivalent academic groupings with different names, sizes and compositions. The definition of a ‘department’ for SWAN purposes can be found on the Athena SWAN website. If in doubt, contact the Athena SWAN Officer well in advance to check eligibility.

It is essential that the contact person for the application is based in the department.

Sections to be included

At the end of each section state the number of words used. Click here for additional guidance on completing the template.

1. Letter of endorsement from the head of department: maximum 500 words

Dear Ms Dickinson,

I’m writing to express my strongest possible support for the Athena SWAN Bronze application by the School of Computer Science, University of Nottingham.
The University of Nottingham works to support women and men equally in their careers, as evidenced by its Athena SWAN Bronze award and its recent application for a Silver Award. As Head of School I want to see this mirrored in the School of Computer Science. I have taken part in all Athena SWAN meetings and helped to shape our application.

As a father of three I understand the need to balance home and work life. The School has policies to support this, e.g. regarding meeting times and flexible working. I believe such family friendly features are an important part of School life and help us to attract and retain the best possible staff.

Much more needs to be done; Computer Science does not attract a large number of women. We have improved the proportion of female students at postgraduate level and we will explore with staff and students what could be done to make core Computer Science a more attractive option for women. We anticipate some key work will be early in the chain with a focus on attracting more female undergraduates.

Rebalancing gender at higher grades will take time but is a crucial goal for the School. We will identify areas of good practice in other STEM Schools, both in Nottingham and elsewhere that we can learn from. I am not underestimating the work that will be required, as you can see from the enclosed Action Plan, we have developed a comprehensive list of ideas that will benefit the School, e.g. better communication of career advancement policies and targeted support funds. These are steps towards change; as the School develops we hope to be able to challenge ourselves further and identify innovative ways forward. Our steady progress is demonstrated by the support we give to academic promotions. In this year’s round, Dr Rong Qu has been promoted to Associate Professor. Rong has also taken on the role of postgraduate course director, one of the key academic service roles in the School (approx. half our teaching income every year comes from our postgraduate courses). She has achieved this whilst looking after a family and is a good example for a role model in our School. We will also engage more with our special Professor, Dr Abigail Sellen, who works for Microsoft Research and advises the School on a number of matters.

I hope our application will meet with your approval. I have found the self-assessment process a useful opportunity for reflection on the culture of our School and the discipline generally. It has highlighted areas of good practice that are already embedded in the School and sharpened our focus on work that needs to be done. This application is our first step in a continuing process of evaluation which we hope will lead to a better working environment for staff.

Uwe Aickelin

[499 words]

2. The self-assessment process: maximum 1000 words

Self-Assessment Team Members:

Uwe Aickelin is Head of the School of Computer Science. He has been an academic with the school for more than 10 years and is also a member of the University’s Senate and Research Board. He is married and has three young children.
Natasha Alechina is an Associate Professor at the School of Computer Science, where she has worked since 1998. She is chairing the self-assessment team.

Sophie Dale-Black was Horizon Operations Manager. Sophie left Horizon (and the team) on the 14th of March 2013 to take up an appointment at another university, but she contributed a lot to the team. For example she took a lead in setting up the staff/RAs/PhD students questionnaire and analysing its results.

James Goulding is the lead Data Scientist at the RCUK funded Horizon Digital Economy Hub at the University of Nottingham. He is an early career researcher, with a BSc in Economics, an MSc in Management of IT, and a PhD in Computer Science. He has one pre-school age child and another baby on the way.

Colin Higgins is an Associate Professor and is the longest standing academic in the School of Computer Science, having been appointed before the School actually formed nearly 30 years ago. He has one young child, three older ones and a partner who has worked full time for much of her career. He has held most of the administrative roles normally held by academics during his time in the School.

Boriana Koleva is an Associate Professor. She has been an academic in the school for 11 years. She has two young children and her husband is in full time employment. She has been working part time (0.6FTE) since returning from her second maternity leave. Boriana was one of the two team members who conducted a focus group with staff to follow up the results of the survey.

Khin Lwin is a PhD student. She completed her undergraduate degree in the school. She was employed as an intern software engineer at Halliburton, UK from 2008 to 2009. She is currently a final year PhD student within the Automated Scheduling, Optimisation and Planning research group.

Sarah Martindale is a Research Fellow at Horizon Digital Economy Research, an interdisciplinary RCUK Research Institute based in the School of Computer Science. She started working there in January 2012, and this is her first postdoctoral position since completing her PhD at another university. She has one pre-school age child, who is cared for by her husband, a stay-at-home dad.

Hannah Robinson is the School’s Director of Operations. She is responsible for all administrative and technical staff within the School and sits on all its key committees. Hannah is married to a full-time academic who works in another School within the University and they have one school-age daughter.

Holger Schnadelbach is a Senior Research Fellow in the Mixed Reality Lab (MRL), one of the research groups in the School of Computer Science. He has been working in the MRL for 13 years on Human Computer Interaction as his main research area. Together with his partner, who is a teacher in a Nottingham primary school, he is looking after two young children. He was one of the two team members who conducted a focus group.
The team was set up in September 2012. The team held a meeting every month since then, apart from in January 2013. During the earlier meetings, the gender balance in the School and wider issues of work-life balance were discussed, and it was decided to administer a questionnaire for the staff and PhD students at the School to inform the Action Plan. The team worked through exemplar surveys provided by the School of Chemistry and used them to develop a survey that would be appropriate to send to all staff and PhD students within the School. The questionnaire ran for December 2012- January 2013 and had a response rate of approximately 40%. Sophie Dale-Black set up and analysed the results of the questionnaire. The results were further analysed by the team and the summary of responses was presented by Natasha Alechina to all staff members at the School meeting on the 20th of February 2013. Based on some of the questionnaire responses (saying that women already had an unfair advantage in academia and there is no reason to do anything to improve the gender balance) it was clear that the team faced a task of changing the culture in the School. The team decided to hold an information event in the next academic year. It was also decided to hold focus groups with staff members to clarify the problems with induction of new members of the School which was a repeated theme in the questionnaire. The focus group with staff was conducted by Boriana Koleva and Holger Schnädelbach on the 7th of March 2013 (the report on the focus group is included in this submission. In the future, the self assessment team will meet bi-monthly, and monitor the implementation of the action plan, in particular student recruitment, staff training in E&D, statistics of gender balance of students, researchers and staff. This is reflected in Actions 1.1, 3.3 and 3.8 of the Action Plan.

3. A picture of the department: maximum 2000 words

Twenty-five years after being established, the School of Computer Science has ‘come of age’, emerging into the top flight of computer science schools in the UK. RAE 2008 placed us in the top 10% of schools in the country according to our research quality. Our RAE sub-profiles suggest that,
through the significant and sustained (re)investment of funds into research, we have established a world-leading research environment which is now driving the production of world-class outputs. The School has the highest EPSRC income for Computer Science (£35m) including two platform grants, a Doctoral Training Centre and a Digital Economy Hub. Its main research areas are: operational research, optimisation and modelling, theory and application of functional programming, agent-based systems, distributed systems and human-centred computing. At the heart of the School’s research is a desire to offer novel methods of addressing real-world problems. The research groups in the School approach this goal in a range of ways leading to applications in many sectors including: health, environment, manufacturing and the arts.

The School offers a number of undergraduate degrees which are accredited by the British Computing Society (BCS) and taught postgraduate programmes which range from the research-focused to “conversion” courses for students with no prior experience of Computer Science.

The School of Computer Science at the University of Nottingham employs over 40 full time academic staff and approximately 65 research assistants, and has a population of over 100 postgraduate research students. In addition to these the School incorporates the Horizon Research Institute and Doctoral Training Centre which employs 15 researchers and has 10 postgraduate students entering the DTC each year.

Student data

Numbers of males and females on access or foundation courses

The School does not offer any specific access or foundation courses and at present has no plans to do so.

Undergraduate male and female numbers

The School has seen a disappointing fall in the proportion of female:male students over the past four years. The percentage of female undergraduates has declined from 19% in 2009/10 and 2010/11 to 15% in 2011/12 and 13% in 2012/13. We plan to address this in the action plan points 1.1-1.3.

![Numbers of female and male undergraduates](chart.png)
Postgraduate male and female numbers completing taught courses

The proportion of female taught postgraduate students has held steadily over 30% for full time students. The numbers for part time students are too small to draw meaningful conclusions (there the percentage oscillates between 0 and 40%).

The overall number of females undertaking PGT courses in CS has remained relatively stable over the past three years against a much greater fluctuation in the number of males completing these courses. Over 80% of the School’s PGT student body comes from outside the EU and our conversion courses (for those whose first degree is not in Computer Science or a related discipline) seem to attract a higher proportion of women.

![Numbers of female and male taught postgraduates](image)

Postgraduate male and female numbers on research degrees

The proportion of female students undertaking research degrees has improved slightly between 2009/10 and 2012/13 and at nearly 30% is now above the national average of 22%. The opening of the Horizon DTC is believed to have contributed to the improved ratios as it offers a more flexible approach to PhD study with PGR students choosing their thesis topic after a year of training rather than identifying a supervisor and topic at the start of the study period. The “Digital Economy” theme of the Horizon Research Institute and DTC highlights the broad applications and interdisciplinary nature of Computer Science; interviews with the female students associated with this research group suggest that this particularly appealed to female students.

The School’s promotional literature includes case studies of female PhD students and female researchers attend the School’s Careers Fair to promote PhD study as one of the future options for undergraduates.
The percentage of undergraduate applications to the courses by female students has declined over the past three years (from 22% in 2009 to 12% in 2011). Female applicants have a 90% chance of being made an offer (slightly better than for male applicants) and the conversion rate for female applicants is similar to that for male applicants. To address this the School will investigate reasons why this downward trend may have occurred and seek advice from the University’s Marketing and Communications team on how to reverse this trend. We will look closely at the number of female applicants to CS courses in the UK and seek to find ways to make our courses more attractive to female applicants. This is being addressed by Action 1.1 in the Action Plan.

The PGT application to offer rate is higher for females than males across the three years from 2009-2012, with the proportion of female applicants averaging at approximately 35% across the same time period. Conversion rates for female applicants averages at 50% against 54% for male applicants, which is encouraging. The School believes that the reason for this is because of the
The proportion of female applicants to postgraduate research places has been approximately 27% over the three year periods, with female PGR applicants gaining slightly better offer rates than male applicants.

Across the School the challenge appears to be attracting female students to our courses as those who do apply have excellent offer rates. The School will undertake work with the support of the University Marketing and Communications team on how to improve the numbers of female applicants and to ensure that our communications with them are appropriate to encourage conversion. This is being addressed by Action 1.2 in the Action Plan.

Degree classification by gender

Over three years the proportion of female students achieving degree classifications of 2:1 and above is slightly better than that of male students. An average of 57% of female students achieved a degree classification of 2:1 or above compared to 55% of male students. The School has identified that it needs to improve the proportion of students graduating with higher degree classifications and care will be taken to ensure that any actions taken do not disadvantage one gender of students compared to the other. This is being addressed by Action 1.3 of the Action Plan.
Staff data

Female:male ratio of academic staff and research staff

Academic Staff

The proportion of female academic staff in the School (15.9%) is slightly below the national average for the subject of 17% (HESA, 2011/12). The School has no female Professors following a resignation in 2012 but 25% of staff at Associate Professor level are female and 18% at Lecturer level. One female member of staff was promoted to Associate Professor in 2010 and we have recently heard that another female lecturer has been successful in her promotion application.

Research Staff

The number of research staff within the School has increased over the past three years, largely due to the development of the Horizon Institute. 16% of research staff are female (national average of 18.7%) and there appears to be a marked drop in the number of female PhD students.
continuing into research careers. We will address this through Actions 2.2 and 2.3 of our Action Plan.

**Turnover by grade and gender**

One female academic (Professor) has left the School in the past three years along with one male academic (Lecturer). The female Professor left because she felt that her research interests were a better fit with an established group in the University’s Business School whereas the male Lecturer left for another UK HEI which offered him the opportunity for promotion. No female research staff have left the School but 5 male researchers have moved on to different posts. There does not appear to be any issues with the retention of female staff in either academic or research posts and the School will endeavour to ensure that we maintain this healthy position by Action 3.4 in our Action Plan.

[1425 words]

4. Supporting and advancing women’s careers: maximum 5000 words

**Job application and success rates by gender and grade**

Only four academic posts have been advertised in the relevant time period as the School has a very low staff turnover rate. We therefore looked at application and success rates for each role rather than on a year by year basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy</th>
<th>No. Male applicants</th>
<th>No. Female applicants</th>
<th>No. Male appointees</th>
<th>No. Female appointees</th>
<th>Male success rate%</th>
<th>Female success rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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This appears to suggest gender imbalance in academic appointments. We therefore looked at the shortlisting information to see whether the interview process was somehow prejudicial to female applicants. We found that female applicants were only shortlisted for Vacancy One and that the shortlisted candidates were evenly split by gender with three male and three female candidates. The School will therefore be taking advice from HR to ensure that its shortlisting and interview processes are not detrimental to female candidates. This is being addressed by Actions 2.1, 3.1 of the Action Plan.

In the same three year period there have been twenty three researcher vacancies within the School. Not all advertised vacancies were filled.
Year | No. Male applicants | No. Female applicants | No. Male appointees | No. Female appointees
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
09/10 | 40 | 28 | 3 | 1
10/11 | 95 | 31 | 6 | 2
11/12 | 84 | 45 | 0 | 3
Total | 219 | 104 | 9 | 6

This suggests that at researcher level female staff have a slightly higher success rate than males (5.77% for females against 4.12% for males).

**Applications for promotion and success rates by gender and grade**

The School has adopted a very proactive approach to promotions and start the process early each year. Potential candidates are identified through discussions at their appraisal meetings so that they can get essential support and advice on their Academic CVs. In addition to this, advice can also be sought directly from the Head of School or other senior staff who sit on the School Promotion Group. Over the last three years, the number of female academics applying for promotion has been low; this is to be expected as the number of female academics within the School is also low (7 in total). The percentage of females applying for promotion therefore is quite high (57%) in comparison to the percentage of male applicants (13.6%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. Male applicants</th>
<th>No. Female Applicants</th>
<th>No. Males promoted</th>
<th>No. Females promoted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recruitment of staff**

All staff sitting on recruitment panels have undertaken training that covers gender awareness; however the School will ensure that further Equality and Diversity training is undertaken (Action 3.1). The School does not actively monitor the gender balance on recruitment panels but it will seek advice from HR on whether we should try to ensure that the Panel Chair (who normally comes from outside the School) is female in at least half of all cases. The current lack of senior female staff in the School means that any female representation on academic recruitment panels is likely to be through the Chair.

Female staff and students are highly visible in all the School’s promotional material and activities to help encourage applications from females. We will review our material to ensure it is free from any unconscious gender bias, particularly in use of language (Action 2.1)
Support for staff at key career transition points

The critical drop-off point of female staff within the School that needs to be addressed is from PhD to post-doctoral level. The low percentage of female applicants for academic positions is also a target area for action. A wide range of personal development, training and networking opportunities are available to staff and PhD students by the University and within the School.

- Mentoring
  All new members of academic staff are provided with a mentor who is an established member of staff from within the School. Research Group leaders also provide mentoring to staff, usually focusing on the research aspects of the role. Personal development, training and networking opportunities are available to staff and PhD students by the University and within the School.

- Appraisal
  Staff at all levels with the opportunity to receive clear and consistent advice on career progression and continuing professional development through the appraisal process. This encourages appraisers to meet with staff on a regular basis throughout the year to review staff progress. The University’s APPLE and WAND programmes also offer a mentoring scheme targeted specifically at female staff.

- Personal Development Training
  The University’s Professional Development team offers a vast range of courses to PhD students, research staff and academic staff covering personal and career development, communications, research and enterprise skills, and supervision/management training.

- Opportunities for Networking
  The School has well-attended seminar series which provides a forum for all staff and PhD students to network. As noted in Actions 1.3 and 2.2 the School will also establish a “Women in Computing” network and promote opportunities for female staff and students to attend associated events such as the Lovelace Colloquium.

- Leadership Training
  Specific Leadership and management development programmes are offered by Professional Development for academic staff.

Career development

Promotion and career development

The School follows the University process for Personal Development and Performance Review (PDPR). During appraisal meetings staff are given clear and consistent advice on how to advance their careers and how to meet any training needs. Those staff who express an interest in promotion or, who in the reviewer’s opinion should be considering a promotion application are given the opportunity to discuss the process during their appraisal meeting.

Every year the School circulating information to staff about the promotions process and staff are invited to discuss any application with the Head of School. Staff wishing to proceed with an application can ask for support in putting together their case from senior staff within the School; some staff whose applications have been successful are also willing to share their promotions cases with others.

The School Promotions Group assesses all applications and makes a recommendation to the Faculty Group. Where the School feels the case is weak feedback is given to the applicant along
with suggestions on how a future application could be improved. Staff can choose to submit their promotion application to the Faculty group even if the School Group suggests that their application is premature. The factors used to inform promotions decisions include: grant income, teaching excellence, publications, impact factor, citizenship, leadership and peer-esteem. Where staff are on part-time contracts or have undertaken periods of leave (e.g. maternity) this is taken into account and the process concentrates on quality of output over quantity. Female members of academic staff are proactive in seeking promotion.

**Induction and training**

The School follows the University guidelines on staff induction but through work done by the self-assessment team induction has been identified as an area in need of significant development. Induction for new staff has been expected to take place within research groups, generally led by members of support staff. There is a reliance on online material rather than face-to-face meetings so new staff are not always well-informed about career development opportunities and relevant policies. This is being addressed by action 3.5.

The University’s PDPR process highlights the importance of training and career development. Staff reported that they feel they have excellent access to training and attendance at such events is encouraged by line managers. In some cases it was felt that the wide audience at some events had a negative impact on the relevance of the content.

**Support for female students**

Significant support is available to female undergraduate and postgraduate students in the School including personal tutors, Course Directors, project supervisors, PhD supervisors (two supervisors are allocated to each student) and through the UG peer mentoring scheme, where female mentors are paired with female mentees. A female academic has volunteered to set-up a network for female students Women in CS associated with the BCS (Chartered Institute of IT) Specialist Group. Female academics in the School have, to date, provided informal mentoring and career advice to female research staff and PhD students.

**Organisation and culture**

**Male and female representation on committees**

The School operates through three key committees, School Management Board, Teaching Committee and Research Committee. At present there is no female academic representation on the School Management Board although the Director of Operations is a member of the group. In previous years a female Professor formed part of the group because of her role as Director of Research and Knowledge Transfer but she has moved on from the School in the past twelve months and the post has passed to a male Professor. This is being addressed by action 2.5.

Teaching Committee has been streamlined over the past twelve months with membership becoming linked to administrative duties. This currently has 33% female membership.

Research Committee has 22% female membership with attendance linked to administrative roles.
Female:male ratio of academic and research staff on fixed-term contracts and open-ended (permanent) contracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year\Staff Type</th>
<th>Fixed-term females</th>
<th>Fixed-term males</th>
<th>Permanent females</th>
<th>Permanent males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>49</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The proportion of females on fixed term contracts is consistently higher than the proportion of male staff on fixed-term contracts. Overall the number of staff on fixed-term contracts within the School has increased because of expansions to the School’s research portfolio in the time period being considered. All fixed-term staff are encouraged to consider their long-term plans and given support to position themselves effectively to obtain permanent posts. Action 2.1 in the Action Plan will particularly consider how female staff can be supported.

**Representation on decision-making committees**

Membership of key committees within the School is role based, such as Head of School, Directors of Teaching and Research. With no females in Professorial roles there is no female academic representation on the School’s Management Board but there is female representation on Research and Teaching Committees. Therefore, it has been identified that it is extremely important for women to apply for promotion to more senior levels within the School and develop a proactive approach to encourage female members of staff to successfully apply for promotion. This is likely to mean asking for support and mentoring for female staff from the wider University. Although the School has not consistently been able to involve female staff in its promotions group, there is usually female representation on the Faculty and University level Promotions Committees. This is being addressed by actions 2.5, 2.6.

**Workload model**

The School Workload Model uses a broad brush approach to give a reasonable indication of the relative weight of lecturing duties, administrative duties and research activity. PhD and grant information is collected at the beginning of each academic year. Future workload is finalised during the second semester of each academic year and sent to individuals for consultation.

The School is participating in the pilot of an hours-based workload planning tool for the University which will provide much greater detail on staff workload. This relates to action 3.6.

**Timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings**

The School has a family-friendly meeting time policy with meetings scheduled to start from 9.30am until 3pm to facilitate childcare responsibilities for a number of years. Where this is not
possible (e.g. because of overseas participation via video conference) sufficient notice is given to ensure that staff with caring responsibilities are able to make alternative arrangements.

Gatherings such as research seminars and graduation celebrations have been held within normal working hours to enable participation by as many staff as possible.

Culture

The School endeavours to create a supportive environment for all staff and students. The Head of School is available for consultation by all staff. The School’s culture of accommodating informal flexible working hours is particularly attractive for staff with children and caring responsibilities.

The School participates in a wide range of outreach activities with female staff participating in many of these events and always those that are targeted at a female audience. In April 2013 the School hosted the BCS Women Lovelace Colloquium (which is an annual event for female undergraduate computer science students organised by the BCS – Chartered Institute of IT) for the first time with one of our female academics as a guest speaker.

Outreach activities

Outreach activities are a designated School administrative role and the importance of this work is recognised by its weighting on the School workload model. The work is discussed by the individuals at their performance review meetings and positive feedback from participants is acknowledged.

Flexibility and managing career breaks

Maternity return rate

There have been two maternity leaves during the relevant period and in both cases the member of staff has returned to their post. The School will continue its informal approach to flexible working and ensure that anyone returning from maternity leave has a period free from teaching immediately following their return.

Paternity, adoption and parental leave uptake

The University of Nottingham provides one week of paternity leave on full salary followed by one week on Statutory Paternity Pay for fathers/partners of new/adopted babies. No staff within the School have taken paternity leave. Some staff who were entitled to paternity leave did not avail of it, preferring to take advantage of the School’s flexible approach to working arrangements. There were no applications for adoption or parental leave in the School over this period. The School offers flexibility for staff to work shorter hours or work from home, if needed, to care for a sick child, which may explain the lack of parental leave uptake.

Numbers of applications and success rates for flexible working by gender and grade

There have been no applications for flexible working.
Flexible working

There have been no formal applications from academics, male or female, for flexible working. Due to the nature of their work academic staff are able to work flexibly without making a formal application. A large number of staff from all job families work flexibly on an informal basis, for example, they may vary their starting and finishing times due to childcare commitments.

Cover for maternity and adoption leave and support on return

Teaching cover is achieved by reducing workload for the academic year in which the staff member starts their leave and re-allocating the teaching duties between other staff members. All PhD students have two supervisors in the School so the second supervisor temporarily assumes responsibility for the student while the principal supervisor is on leave. Staff members can also remain in occasional contact with their research group while on leave making use of “Keeping in touch” days if they wish to do so.

The School plans to formalise its policy of reducing the workload of staff returning from maternity leave to ensure that teaching responsibilities are minimal for a period of six months following return from maternity leave.

[2487 words]

5. Any other comments: maximum 500 words

Athena Swan Focus Group

The analysis of the Athena Swan survey conducted within Computer Science presented a number of issues and open questions. The team decided that these should be followed up by focus group. Six staff participated: two female and four male. Five were early career (four RAs and one lecturer) and one professor. Two members of the Athena Swan group ran the session which was audio taped to allow further analysis if required. The key issues identified in the survey responses structured the session. These were discussed in turn with the aim of identifying potential solutions/next steps.

Induction

Participants confirmed that they felt insufficient information is provided about school processes and facilities and that the strong group culture might be in the way of more effective induction. A basic pack of information should be provided by the School before new staff arrive; there should be social events and a staff room for people to meet.

Transition

Discussion focused on insufficient salary progression and lack of financial rewards. It was observed the promotion takes too long while there can be no corrective measures within the same salary band. The school was commended on how well the post-doc community is integrated in school processes. It was unclear how much taking on a role in the school influenced progression and it was difficult to progress around anything but research. People agreed that the training
opportunities are good and well supported by supervisors and line managers. This was positively compared to other institutions.

**Gender issues**

There was agreement that gender had not been used by others to influence somebody’s career or progression on a ‘day-to-day’ level. A number of gender related problems were discussed including the difficulty of fitting a maternity break in an academic career (particularly at RA level). It was observed that maternity and paternity leave was poor in comparison to other universities. People argued against women only events especially if they also excluded men from being the audience in a seminar for example. When men-only events were set up in parallel to women-only events they were not attended. Useful initiatives for the School would be an event on female career progression which would involve successful female academics speaking about their experience and providing a career progression advice role in the School. There was debate on why CS does not currently appeal as much to women but no firm conclusions were reached.

**Working Hours**

Participants felt they worked long hours that are hard to fit with family life but which were expected and required to progress. They agreed it is hard to measure working hours consistently and the problem is endemic in academia. It was felt that progression was harder for those working part-time.

There are insufficient childcare places at the University and people who reduce their hours because of care commitments are not guaranteed a full-time job when the commitments have receded.

[483 words]
### 6. Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description of action</th>
<th>Action taken already and outcome at April 2013</th>
<th>Further action planned at April 2013</th>
<th>Progress Log</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Success Measure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Gender balance in UG student population</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Continue analysis of application statistics to understand why we are recruiting fewer female students</td>
<td>Data collected for UG applications to the school and acquired for suitably qualified UCAS applicants nationally</td>
<td>Analyse data on offer acceptance by gender and look at destinations of suitably qualified female applicants by course and institution</td>
<td>Data collection is ongoing</td>
<td>School Marketing and Outreach team</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>Determine reasons for recent decline in female recruitment and identify measures to address this</td>
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</table>
| 1.2    | Attract female students to UG courses | Images in publicity materials reviewed to ensure no unconscious gender bias | - Review text in publicity materials to ensure no unconscious gender bias  
- Employ more female role models at recruitment activities  
- Review Open Days set-up to ensure that there is no unconscious gender bias in activities on offer | | School Marketing and Outreach team | July 2013 for the first review, then ongoing 2014-16 | Increase the proportion of female undergraduates to 20% in 2016 |
|   | Provide support for new and current UG students | - Schools supports student society CompSoc  
- Students are assigned "Guru"'s who are good programmers from higher years | - Ensure new female students are offered female "Guru"  
- Promote visibility of female staff at key events such as School curry nights  
- Develop female CS network to be open to all female students and staff | Senior Tutor and Qualifying Year Co-ordinator | Sept. 2013, then on-going 2014-16 "Women in CS" to be set up by Sept.2014 | Sept 2013 | Maintain high achievement levels by female UG students (measured by the proportion attaining a 1st or 2:1 degree) |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Gender balance in staff</td>
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</table>
| 2.1 | Address poor female application and success rate for academic positions | - Ask for advice from HR on wording of advertisements and job descriptions to ensure that they are free from unconscious gender bias and demonstrate the School's positive attitude to flexible working arrangements  
- Ensure panel members undergo E&D training | HoS/Director of Operations | As vacancies arise | April 2013 | - Raise the proportion of female applicants for academic posts to an average of 40% by September 2016  
- Equal success rate for female and male applications  
- Ensure 100% of interview panel members underwent E&D training or interview panel chair training |
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<tr>
<th>2.2</th>
<th>Support female post-doctoral students considering a career in academia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>- Hold a focus group with current PhD students to determine any obstacles</td>
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<td>- Promote University career development programmes such as APPLE</td>
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<td>- Explore mentoring opportunities that may be available through learned societies</td>
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<td>- Explore the possibility of a faculty wide mentoring scheme for female early career researchers</td>
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<td>- Develop the &quot;Women in CS&quot; network</td>
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<td>HoS/Director of Research</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td><strong>Promote and support fellowship applications</strong></td>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td><strong>Publicise female role models via case studies and other activities on School website and social media</strong></td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>Improve gender balance in senior staff</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>Improve female representation on School Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Host an Equality and Diversity Training Event that will be open to all staff and PhD students</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>Provide information on persistent gender bias in science to staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Keep staff informed of SWAN activities</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>Formalise existing School policies that promote a healthy work/life balance</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Develop improved induction procedures</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
<td>Fully implement the University’s workload model</td>
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<td>3.7</td>
<td>Improve social interaction between staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Continue SAT meetings and implement Athena SWAN principles</td>
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