

## **Stream B: Sharing good practice**

**Title:** Changes and improvements in SEBE's student teaching and support work following our Athena SWAN submission

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### **Introduction**

Introduced in 2005, the Athena SWAN charter aims to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women working in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) within higher education. Following the University's 2015 successful application for an Athena SWAN Bronze Institutional award, SEBE has submitted for a departmental award. The Athena SWAN remit has expanded to include students; together with staff in professional and support roles. To prepare the submission, a team of 13 staff and PGR students gathered (and analysed) data and detailed information from the past three academic years. This has included such as: gender balance of students and staff, the student "pipeline" into academic posts, career progression, working environment and support mechanisms. Our application was submitted on 30<sup>th</sup> November, including a detailed Action Plan designed to clearly show how SEBE will address issues that have been identified.

### **Analysis**

The examination and subsequent assessment of how gender imbalance issues can best be addressed was beneficial. While we feel that SEBE has a strong track record (e.g. the work of the "Connect" student network, good equality scores in the 2015 staff survey), the submission required the School to demonstrate where we are at present. For example, trends in staff & student gender ratios, student feedback, gender balance in student attainment, culture, local flexible working practices. It was crucial that our submission looked at SEBE in terms of good practice; as opposed to relying only on University initiatives and HR policies.

A key theme we want to advance is how to attract and support more female students. Our data shows SEBE to have 14% female students; broadly in line with HESA sector averages. However, percentages vary by specialism, with the highest female numbers (27%) being in UG building & surveying (BSV) subjects. We confirmed that a larger percentage of female students obtain 1<sup>st</sup> class honours compared to male students, and that a smaller percentage of female students obtain 3<sup>rd</sup> class honours. However, female numbers are only 9% of total PGT and in terms of degree classification, the percentage of female students gaining a distinction has reduced over the past 3 years.

### **Proposed new initiatives** include:

1. Enhanced Equality & Diversity representation at Applicant and Open Days.
2. Wider use of female student ambassadors.
3. Consider how to make practical UG content and industrial placements as accessible as possible to female students.
4. Introduce a "buddy" system for female Access Programme students.
5. Examine if any lessons from BSV can be taken forward in terms of recruiting, supporting and retaining more female UG students across SEBE.
6. Examine how to encourage female staff and PG students to apply to SEBE (and, thereafter, how to best assist with their career progression).
7. System in place to allow female students to request a female PDT.
8. Consider gender allocation for tutorial and project groups.

9. Offer Equate coaching more widely to female PGR students and staff.

10. Examine why the percentage of female PGT students gaining a distinction has reduced.

(500 words)

