

Letter of Endorsement from the Vice Chancellor

Bangor University's strategic aim is to further enhance its reputation in the areas of research and teaching. We have substantially improved our position in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2011-12, and are now placed among the world's top 275 universities.

The key to this success is the contribution of all staff at the University and we strive to develop and nurture the talents of our staff. One of our strategic aims is to be a sustainable university, adopting a 'One planet living' approach with equality as one of the key principles. The Athena SWAN benchmarks are providing us with a framework to develop effective initiatives to ensure that women are empowered to contribute fully to the research and teaching and learning agendas of the University and the lessons learned from this process will inform other equality initiatives across the University.

We are using the Athena SWAN benchmarks to develop effective initiatives to ensure that women fully contribute to the research and teaching and learning agendas of the University.

I am writing to strongly endorse this application from Bangor University for an Athena Swan Bronze Award. The Athena Swan project developed from initial research into gender issues in the University and that project highlighted the disparity in the levels of women (particularly at senior levels) working in academic roles in the SET Colleges. The University has a strong commitment to equal opportunities and regards addressing gender issues as a key action point.

The Athena Swan project has been given full support by the University's Executive and have been heavily involved in the development of the action plan and the very active Athena SWAN Group.

The Athena SWAN initiative was launched with the 'Women in Science' conference in March 2011. The response to the conference was excellent and the feedback following the event demonstrated that it has inspired many of the participants to further develop their careers in science and in higher education.

Also, in addition, the SET departments are committed to improving the gender balance of departments, though not all have yet managed to successfully reverse a historical deficit of women in the discipline. However, there are a number of encouraging signs, particularly in the increase in women researchers in the early stages of their careers.

We have had a Gender Action Plan since 2010 and the Athena SWAN Group have now developed a specific plan to compliment the Gender Action Plan. This three year plan will be a dynamic document and will develop and adapt as necessary as further areas of action are identified.

Participation in the Athena Swan project has already had a number of benefits for the University. It has sent a strong signal that the senior management of the University encourages the participation and contribution of *all* its staff.

I am pleased to submit this application for your attention for an Athena SWAN Bronze Award.

Prof John G Hughes
Vice Chancellor