

● Notes from panel/roundtables at AC2015 workshops, and follow-up conversations

Workshop information

The following sessions, convened and chaired by Ian Cook (University of Exeter, UK) and Hilary Geoghegan (University of Reading, UK), took place at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2015, on Friday 4 September 2015:

- Athena SWAN: Panel discussion (session 251)
- Athena SWAN: Interactive Workshop with Action Points (session 274)

The panel presentations and roundtable discussions from these sessions are summarised below.

Notes from discussion

The overall goal must be a framework for change, not just achieving the award. A long-term view of action planning is therefore essential if a 'lived culture' of equality is to be achieved.

The process can be difficult and time-consuming, but it has the potential to bring together groups of people who are passionate about these issues who might not have the opportunity to discuss it or bring about change before. It is an opportunity to hear different voices.

Bigger picture:

- This is not about being in competition with other departments
- Think about how you position Athena SWAN (e.g. for women vs for everyone) and how men and women will engage (the same? differently?). For example, what are the names of your Committees and initiatives? Is it clear what they do?
- Athena SWAN is one mechanism for cultural change, alongside other institutional activities
- Consider how this work will affect academics, professional and support staff, and students. This is not just an HR exercise.
- Keep the lines of communication open, from starting the application to delivering the actions -- "You said, we did!"

Attention should be paid to hierarchies, power, responsibility and task allocation within and across:

- Team preparing the application (who is doing the labour – how fairly has it been shared? Is there recognition in the WLM/WAM?)
- The overall process for change (who will deliver actions)
- The efforts to engage and gain 'buy-in' from (professional/support and academic) staff and students
- Committee turnover/progression – maintaining a balance of skills, visibility, levels of authority etc

