

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES)

E&D Committee - Terms of Reference

Purpose

GEES E&D Committee was established in May 2014 by the Head of School in order to:

- a) Implement the Athena Swan Bronze award action plan (from May 2014-April 2017)
- b) Play a key role in promoting a positive working environment in which staff and students are treated fairly and with respect, promoting equality and diversity by supporting individuals to embrace diversity within UoB, particularly related to 9 protected characteristics¹
- c) Scrutinise School business from the perspective of enhancing equality and diversity
- d) Act as a conduit between School, College and UoB level equality and diversity activities

Aims and Responsibilities

Athena SWAN aims:

1. improve our **knowledge base** and **raise awareness** of potential gender imbalances within GEES, relating to both students and staff
2. **tackle any discipline-specific gender imbalances** between different subject areas (geography, planning, earth sciences, environmental sciences)
3. increase the number of women applying for academic jobs in GEES and ensuring gender sensitivity and neutrality throughout the **recruitment process**
4. support and **advancing women's careers** through improvements to the induction process, active support for female progression and promotion
5. cultivate a **family-friendly workplace culture** and organisation by ensuring good gender balance in seminars and committees, holding crucial activities within core hours, holding social events, raising awareness of parental leave policies and promoting university gender equality policies
6. participate in **UoB initiatives** to enhance gender equality (e.g. WIN WIN network)

E&D aims:

1. self-assess equalities issues faced by the School
2. ensure the delivery of equality objectives set by the School
3. local implementation of actions arising from the University Equality Scheme
4. assist with compliance against key equality legislation
5. raise awareness of E&D and promote various staff groups e.g. LGBT, Race and Cultural Diversity and Disability Groups
6. participate in UoB initiatives to enhance equality and diversity

Membership

Membership is currently open to all staff in GEES, for an indefinite term

¹ Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Religion or Belief, Pregnancy and Maternity, Sexual Orientation, Transgender and Marriage and Civil Partnership

- E&D/Athena Swan Champion
- Head of School
- Members of academic staff at different career stages (post-doctoral research to professor)
- Members of professional services staff
- Balance of male and female staff
- Representation of part-time staff
- Representation across the teaching programme areas

Accountability

The committee reports to:

- School staff via monthly School meetings
- School Executive Committee via attendance at monthly meetings, a standing item on E&D and sharing the committee minutes beforehand
- CoLES Athena Board monthly (new since Feb 2016)
- CoLES E&D group – via newsletters and termly meetings
- University Athena Working Group, termly meetings and sends progress reports
- University E&D Champions network, termly meetings

Review

- The committee is presented with an annual progress report on progress with Athena SWAN action plan, in addition to regular interim reports on Athena and E&D activity.
- The terms of reference should be reviewed annually

Working methods

- Termly meetings (3 per year) are convened and chaired by the E&D/Athena Swan champion who circulates the agenda in advance and takes minutes
- The E&D/Athena Swan champion reports on School, College and University E&D strategy, policies, implementation, activity and meetings, events
- All members can raise agenda items and issues to be discussed
- All relevant information and resources are shared via the GEES Equalities and Diversity CANVAS course², as well as through weekly GEES Newsletters and monthly School meetings
- Sub-groups can be convened to work on specific aspects of E&D, such as:
 - Submission of Athena Silver award application
 - Developing and implementing school equality objective
 - Data collection and analysis
 - E&D events and awareness raising, e.g. International Women's Day, March yearly
 - Engaging students with E&D activity (UG and PG; different programmes)
 - Working with PERCAT on early career researcher development
 - Commissioning, monitoring uptake and evaluating E&D training within the School

² <https://birmingham.instructure.com/courses/6953>