

Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team
Identifications of Priorities & outstanding actions
July 2024
Submitted to EDI Forum by Claudia de Rham

Following multiple months of department consultation (surveys, discussions at various levels, data,...) and 4 months of work and discussions with circa 20 members of SAT, analyzing previous Athena Swan applications (Imperial physics and others), action plan and feedback, collated data & statistics and additional information, the following is the summary of the priorities identified by the Self-Assessment Team as presented by SAT on July 10th 2024 led by

- Judith Baylis, EDI (communicated in advance via email)
- Angelina Blackwood-Hernandez, recruitment
- Michael Fox, student support
- Daniel Waldram, culture
- Claudia de Rham, chair

The vision is to put into place actions that support all members of the department to succeed – recognizing that success can be seen in a variety of ways. To achieve this goal, we have identified three priority areas where action is needed:

Priority 1. Transparency in expectations and efficient communications

Priority 2. Staff and Student welfare and support

Priority 3. Engagement with underrepresented minorities (ethnic minorities & women)

All discussions have been centered around an improvement of the **environment culture** offered by the physics department. This includes identified needs for improved

- communication between staff, students, department and college (1&2)
- fairness and transparency on procedures, institutional memory & record keeping/monitoring (1&2)
- transparency and increased accessibility of information, signposting and expectations (1&2)
- visibility and accessibility of existing support in place (1&2)
- management of workload and staff welfare (2)
- awareness of issues faced by minorities (gender, cultural, backgrounds, others,...) (1&3)
- engagement with underrepresented minorities (3)

What does a positive Culture look like and actions towards it?

I. Environment with Transparent **Expectations** and Efficient **Communication**

Actions:

1. Set clear department and community induction plans for new PhDs in presence of supervisor with set of expectations in place
2. Supervisor and student to have follow-up discussions on expectations for their work together and what a positive PhD looks like
3. Set clear department and community induction plans for ECRs with better connection between ECRs
4. Start of year culture awareness and expectation conversation (including better awareness on issues faced by minorities)
5. Systematic annual review of signposting of existing support in college, faculty and department (wellbeing, mental health, staff support, parental leave, prizes, bullying & harassment, report & support, train supervisor...) with assigned person in charge to maintain information up to date
6. Systematic review of internal and external facing webpages. Discussion of how the department wants to be seen externally and alignment with recruitment goals.
7. Review and improve communication on recruitment/promotion/sabbatical/... processes
8. Maintain an up-to-date record on recruitment, searches/selection panel representation, including gender and ethnic minorities representation at each level.

II. Environment where staff and students feel **supported**, **positively challenged** and **excited to work together** (in excellent quality environment)

Actions: (in addition to 1-5):

9. Improve support UG students towards PGR applications
10. Improve support towards career progression (including careers beyond academia)
11. Work with college to encourage more efficient and regular supervisor training
12. Enable open discussions and signposting on unconscious biases, imposter phenomenon and other commonly identified challenges
13. Build an alumni network to provide relevant mentoring advice to undergraduate students based on career interests.

In parallel, the LT is currently working towards a better management of staff workload

III. **Inclusive and Diverse Environment**

Actions: measures and actions included in 4, 8, 9, 10, 12:

14. **Improve WP and WiP engagement strategy (led by physics WP-outreach coordinator)**
15. Analyze and identify relevant recommendations in existing studies performed on student gender and diversity gaps data (privilege studies performed in physics, including studies performed beyond Imperial)
Member of the SAT to communicate with teaching community
16. Set rules on gender and ethnic minorities representation in recruitments (in coordination with Actions 7 and 8)
17. Leverage existing networks of WNBIP and Blakett Lab Family to support students and ECRs to the next step of their careers.