Athena SWAN Silver department award application

Name of university: University of Oxford

Department: Engineering Science

Date of application: November 2012

Date of university Bronze and/or Silver Athena SWAN award: 2010

Contact for application: Professor Guy Houlsby

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Departmental website address: www.eng.ox.ac.uk

1. Letter of endorsement from the Head of Department – maximum 500 words

An accompanying letter of endorsement from the Head of Department should explain how the SWAN action plan and activities in the Department contribute to the overall Department strategy and academic mission.

The letter is an opportunity for the Head of Department to confirm their support for the application and to endorse and commend any women and SET activities that have made a significant contribution to the achievement of the departmental mission.

Attached (496 words)

2. The self-assessment process (992 words)

Describe the Self-Assessment Process. This should include:

a) The self assessment team (NOTE: personal information has been removed from this section before publication)

Dr Penny Probert Smith, the Panel Chair, Reader in Engineering Science

Dr Duane Ager, Postdoctoral Research Assistant
Dr Alex Czapiewska, Project manager for the Wellcome/EPSRC Centre of Engineering Excellence

Dr Jane Frew, Deputy Administrator (Academic)

Dr Chris Martin, University Lecturer and Tutorial Fellow

Professor Alison Noble, Technikos Professor of Biomedical Engineering and current Director of the Institute of Biomedical Engineering.

Professor Dominic O’Brien, Deputy Head of Department

Mrs Bahbibi Rahmatullah, Post graduate student

Dr Julia Schnabel, University Lecturer and Tutorial Fellow

Dr Helen Townley, Senior Postdoctoral Research Assistant

Ms Lucy Townsend, HR Manager

Professor Martin Williams, Titular Professor in Engineering Science

Within the panel are members with

- Experience of balancing an academic role with responsibility for children at every stage of the academic path (D.Phil, post-doctoral and permanent academic)
- Experience of balancing an academic role with being a single parent
- Experience of balancing an academic role with responsibility for children with a partner who also has a career (including partners with academic careers and partners whose work is based outside Oxford)
- Experience of returning to an academic role after a maternity break
- Experience of caring responsibilities for an elderly parent

The team was supported by Samina Luthfa, Gender Researcher from the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division.

In October 2012 the self-assessment team was reconstituted as the Athena SWAN Working Group. Some of the original members were unable to continue due to change in their job, responsibilities or student status. The new members appointed were the new Head of Finance and Administration Dr Joanna Rhodes, the Chair of Faculty1 Dr Rene Banares-Alcartra and the Director of Graduate Studies Professor David Murray. The Head of Department will also attend Working Group meetings.

[632 words]

b) an account of the self assessment process: details of the self assessment team meetings, including any consultation with staff or individuals outside of the university, and how these have fed into the submission;

The self assessment process started in November 2011 following meetings between the Head of Department and the University Head of Personnel. Dr Penny Probert

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1 The Faculty Committee includes all academics in the Department
Smith was asked to lead the team, drawing on her experience with the University Equality Unit as part of the University Leadership Programme between 2006 and 2007.

The panel was formed in December 2011. It met formally together five times during the assessment process, with email contact in between.

Consultation with postgraduates and researchers took place through three focus groups with a trained facilitator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group 1</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Postgraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6F</td>
<td>2M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group 2</td>
<td>2F,2M (1 with children)</td>
<td>1M, 1F (no children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group 3</td>
<td>3F, 1M (with children)</td>
<td>3F, 1M (with children)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consultation with undergraduates was through a survey on SurveyMonkey and consultation with representatives on the Staff Student Joint Consultation Committee. All women academic staff were consulted, together with all academic staff who had supervised staff or students who had taken maternity leave in the last three years. Presentations were made to all key departmental committees, including Faculty, and the submission and action plan were agreed with Departmental Committee².

[157 words]

c) Plans for the future of the self assessment team, such as how often the team will continue to meet, any reporting mechanisms and in particular how the self assessment team intends to monitor implementation of the action plan

The Athena SWAN Working Group will meet formally on a termly basis to monitor the action plan and analyse new data as it becomes available. Between meetings responsibility will be delegated to an Athena SWAN Executive Team who will meet monthly. It is felt that this will provide a good balance between efficiency and the desire for consultation with the wider team who represent all the facets of departmental life. Both will be chaired by Dr Penny Probert Smith. The Deputy Head of Department will take over executive responsibility whilst the chair is acting as Assessor. Teams working on specific actions will meet as required. As far as possible, actions will be addressed through existing structures in the Department to ensure they are integrated fully into its administration.

The Working Group will be responsible for preparing an Annual Report setting out a comprehensive set of data relating to gender issues within the Department from student to staff issues. This will be considered in the autumn term by each key committee. The annual action plan will be agreed based on this consultation. Key Committees are the Departmental Committee, Faculty, Undergraduate Studies Committee, Postgraduate Studies Committee and the Admissions and Access Committee. [Action Plan 1.1]

[203 words]

3. A picture of the department (1983 words)

a) Provide a pen-picture of the department to set the context for the application, outlining in particular any significant and relevant features.

² The Departmental Committee is responsible for strategy and resource allocation
The Department of Engineering Science is unusual in that it is a unified department carrying out teaching and research across the whole range of the engineering disciplines – civil, mechanical, electrical, chemical, information and biomedical. The Department is proud of this tradition; for us “Engineering Science” means more than just “all the engineering disciplines under one roof”. We emphasise the links between the different areas, recognise no barriers between them, and take the view that many modern challenges need this interdisciplinary approach.

The Department currently has 78 academic staff, about 100 research staff, 90 support staff, 620 undergraduate students and 280 graduate students. Our overall turnover is about £26m per annum, with 75% of this being attributable to research, which is supported by research councils, industry, the EU and charities. Our research and teaching has consistently been rated in the highest categories both in formal assessments and in published league tables. All undergraduate courses are accredited by all the major professional engineering institutions.

All undergraduates take a 4-year course leading to an M.Eng. degree in Engineering Science or Engineering, Economics and Management. Courses are underpinned by an emphasis on tutorial and other small group teaching such as project work. All undergraduates are member of a college. Academics participate in admissions and tutorial provision through their colleges.

Postgraduate research students study mainly for a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) with just a few taking a Master’s by Research (MSc). In addition there is a one year taught MSc programme in Biomedical Engineering.

The Department operates on four sites, with the central site on Parks Road the focus for teaching and for most academics. The Institute of Biomedical Engineering was set up next to the hospitals in 2007, and has flourished since then, now being the home to almost 200 of our staff and students working in the biomedical area. Other significant activities are in the Southwell Building, and at Begbroke Science Park.

[262 words]

b) Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.

A Student data

(i) **Numbers of males and females on access or foundation courses** – comment on the data and describe any initiatives taken to attract women to the courses.

Oxford does not run foundation courses; however, a range of outreach activity is supported targeted at potential undergraduates (see Outreach section).

[21 words]

(ii) **Undergraduate male and female numbers** – full and part-time – comment on the female: male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the impact to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.
Our undergraduate degrees are full time MEng Courses. In 2011-2012 there were 671 undergraduates of whom 23.7% were female. This needs to be set in the context of the available “pool” of potential students. While numbers of women admitted vary from year to year the rolling 3 years average of students on course has increased from 20.6% (2006-08) to 24% (2009-11).

The ratio compares favourably with the national average of 12% on general engineering courses. The most comparable courses in terms of structure and student entry qualifications is Cambridge with 25.9% women. We note that of those achieving an A or A* in A'Level Physics (one of our entry requirements) only 32.7% nationally are female. Plans to improve our ratio further are focussed on our outreach work.

[127 words]

(iii) **Postgraduate male and female numbers completing taught courses**

full and part-time – comment on the female:male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

The only taught course is the MSc in Biomedical Engineering, which started in 2006/07. Between 2008/09 and 2010/11 there were on average 28.5% women on the course. In 2011/12 there were 21 students on the course of whom 42% were female. Our Action Plan includes improvements to our outreach and monitoring of course completion. [Action Plan 2.3, 2.4]

Comparisons with other institutions are difficult because of the individual nature of the courses. Comparable ratios for MSc courses (2008/09 to 2010/11) are Cambridge 33%, and Imperial 16%.

[86 words]

(iv) **Postgraduate male and female numbers on research degrees** – full and part-time – comment on the female:male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

From 2008/09 to 2010/11 23% of our doctoral students on average were female. This compares favourably with the national average of 19% and with Cambridge (20%). We have had particular success in recruiting women post graduates in the biomedical area. This is an area where we also have a high ratio of female academics. This is an example of where the Institute of Biomedical Engineering is acting as beacon of good practice within the Department. Our Action Plan includes learning from this area.

[83 words]

(v) **Ratio of course applications to offers and acceptances by gender for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research degrees** – full and part-time – comment on the female:male ratio compared with the national picture for the discipline. Describe any initiatives taken to address any imbalance and the effect to date. Comment upon any plans for the future.

Undergraduates
Undergraduate admission to Oxford is by UCAS application. Undergraduates apply to read Engineering Science or Engineering, Economics and Management, but may also change between them after a common first year. Therefore we have collated numbers for the two courses.

The number of applications by gender is shown below. Since 2008 applications from women have risen by 78% compared to applications from men which have risen by 46%. In 2011 23.6% of applicants were female, up from 20.2% in 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women applicants have been slightly more successful than men but the difference is not significant.

Since the number of undergraduates declining a place is so small, these figures have not been included. It is not anticipated that the aptitude test which will be introduced in 2012 will affect these ratios, but this possibility will be monitored. [Action Plan 2.1]

While our performance remains similar to our peers, our efforts in this area are concentrated on outreach to maintain the increase in numbers of women applying.

[164 words]

Post graduate taught degrees
We accept up to 24 students a year on the MSc in biomedical engineering. Applicant numbers have risen since the course has become more widely known. In 2011 43 women applied compared to 45 men. The offer rate for females is slightly below that for males but numbers are too small for there to be statistical significance. We will monitor this carefully. [Action Plan 1.1]
From 2008 to 2010 inclusive the Department secured two Medtronic Foundation Scholarships annually to support women or people from developing countries. These have played a vital role in promoting women in engineering. One of the first graduates to benefit stayed in Oxford to complete a DPhil and is now a researcher in the IBME. Following the success of this programme the plan includes a commitment to seeking to repeat this approach in other areas of engineering. [Action Plan 2.3]

Post graduate research degrees

The numbers applying for post graduate degrees rose sharply in 2009 reflecting the general graduate job market but also the establishment of the Doctoral Training Centre. Applications have remained high since. In 2008 the proportion of females applying was 19%; in the last three years the proportion of females applying has remained at about 24%. There is a very consistent picture in terms of rate of success measured by offers and acceptances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Graduate Research Applications 2008-2011</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Offers</th>
<th>Acceptances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>75 (24%)</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>37 (25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(vi) Degree classification by gender

Comment on any differences in degree attainment between males and females and describe what actions are being taken to address any imbalance.

In 2006 a review of the undergraduate course was undertaken. We had noted under the old course that women were performing less well than men both in terms of the numbers of First Class degrees and in the combined number of Firsts and 2:1’s. The course was changed so that examinations which had previously been held in the third year were split between second and third years, with the result that material is
now largely examined in the year in which it is taught. Additional coursework (established as being favourable to women) was also introduced as were more optional papers.

To account for the change figures are presented for 4 years under the old course and the one year of the new one\(^3\). In addition graphs are shown over the last seven years to illustrate long term trends. Results at the First/2:1 boundary levels in the new course (vital for continuing in academic positions or many highly regarded posts outside academia) are encouraging with women out-performing men for the first time in the 7 years presented and 100% women achieving a 2:2 or better.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate examination performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004:2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are concerns that women still do not do so well in their end of first year exams (Prelims), though these do not count towards the final degree classification. While

\(^3\) The quoted year relates to the course start date. Students starting in 2008 completed their degrees in 2012.
welcoming the progress that has been made through the new course, the current focus of action is to understand the factors behind the improvement in women’s achievement throughout the course. A survey was launched in September 2012 to obtain feedback that can be analysed by gender. In addition a longitudinal analysis is being carried out to track women’s performance over each year of the new course to help identify potential causes of differences. Evidence is also being gathered in more detail about performance of undergraduates in mathematics prior to admission as this has been tentatively identified as a potential cause of weaker 1st year performance. [Action Plan 2.2]
PGT (MSc) results

This course has been running since 2007-8. In contrast to undergraduate results, women are slightly outperforming men but there is no statistical significance in the differences.

[26 words]

PGR (DPhil) results

Figures for D.Phil outcomes were collated for entry years 2003-7 for research degrees (57 women, 208 men). On average the time to submission is similar for women as it is for men with only a small difference in those submitting within and outside 4 years.

However women are more likely withdraw or to transfer to a lower degree (normally the MSc by research). The Action Plan includes a commitment to investigate this further. The investigation will include a review of the use of the suspended status during the DPhil to cover periods of difficulty which might include caring responsibilities. [Action Plan 2.4]

[102 words]

B Staff data

(i) **Female: male ratio of academic staff and research staff** – researcher, lecturer, senior lecturer, reader, professor (or equivalent). comment on any differences in numbers between males and females and say what action is being taken to address any underrepresentation at particular grades/levels
The number of female academics (Lecturer and Professor categories) has remained relatively stable over the last 3 years. In 2011 there were eight men holding statutory professorships and one woman. The remaining professors are awarded the title through a "Recognition of Distinction" exercise which is run approximately bi-annually. The title change does not imply any change in duties or salary. ("See Key Transition Points") Since the above figures a further two women have been appointed.

National figures from HEFCE\(^4\) showed the number of women permanent academics in Engineering as 15% in 2010; as at 1\(^{st}\) October 2012 the proportion in the Department was 8%. Comparison with different institutions is difficult because of the nature of posts and the nature of the course and research interests in the Department; for example, women are well represented in Biomedical Engineering where currently 29% of the academics are female.

At researcher level the difference is still large with 11% female and as this is the pipeline to the academic posts it is important to spend time understanding the data and its drivers (see Section 4b.ii).

Actions to address the under-representation of women on the staff already in place include a review of the wording and placing of job advertisements – all now include comments to encourage people who have taken career breaks to apply. All jobs will be advertised on women in science websites. Once the Athena SWAN area of the website is complete all job advertisements will also point there. [Action Plan 3.3, 5.1]

For permanent appointments we are investigating mechanisms to assist our selection panels to search for qualified female candidates as part of the appointments process. We believe that this is one of the key actions that could help the Department address the imbalance in academic staff over the years. [Action Plan 3.1]

Precisely because turnover is relatively low and therefore changing the overall balance of academic staff will be gradual the Department is also investigating the potential to appoint female associates. Appropriately qualified women would be

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\(^4\) www.hesa.ac.uk,
approached to be associated with the Department – possibly providing one or two lectures or seminars a year. We see this as an area where we could usefully draw on our links with industrial partners linked with our University Technology Centres. We see this as having a potentially very significant benefits. [Action Plan 3.2]

Actions in relation to internal promotion are discussed in section 4(ii). [Action Plan 4.1].

[416 words]

(ii) **Turnover by grade and gender** – comment on any differences between men and women in turnover and say what is being done to address this. Where the number of staff leaving is small, comment on the reasons why particular individuals left.

Turnover among permanent academics is too low to allow for any overall trends to be identified. In the last 4 years only one female academic has left the Department. She was a Departmental Lecturer on a fixed term contract who left to take up a permanent academic post in her home country. In the same period 8 men (12.5%) have left the Department.

Among researchers 18 women and 99 men have left since 2007. The main leaving reason is the end of a fixed term contract. At the moment the way our data is recorded means that we cannot monitor any other substantive reasons that occurred at the same time as the end of contract. We have now introduced an updated leavers’ process with a more in-depth exit questionnaire. This is designed to uncover any other issues that lead to turnover for which we can put further actions in place and we will continue to monitor this.

[157 words]

**Supporting and advancing women’s careers** (4825 words)

4. **Key career transition points**

a) Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.

(i) **Job application and success rates by gender and grade** - comment on any differences in recruitment between men and women at any level and say what action is being taken to address this.

In the three years to July 2011 the Department recruited 4 professors, 14 lecturers and 85 researchers.
### Percentage and number of women applying and being appointed (2008 - 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statutory professors</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>36 (10%)</td>
<td>324 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortlisted</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>73 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
<td>20 (23%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% female applicants ultimately successful: 50%  6%  6%

% male applicants ultimately successful: 6%  3%  5%

#### Percentage and number of men and women applying for Statutory Professorships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Shortlisted</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Shortlisted</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Shortlisted</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Percentage and number of men and women applying for University Lecturerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Shortlisted</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Shortlisted</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Shortlisted</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At each level proportionately fewer women than men applied with the ratio worsening with seniority. However, on aggregate, having applied, at each level a higher ratio of women than men are successful in being appointed.

The female appointment to statutory professor and the appointment of two female lecturers coincided with the development of the Institute of Biomedical Engineering. A further female was appointed to a lectureship in October 2011 (just missing this data). Further posts in biomedical engineering in the new data year have seen shortlists with strong representation by females in contrast to other areas of engineering where males dominate at every stage.

The Action Plan includes actions to encourage women to apply for positions as this is clearly the first area for action. [Action Plan 3.1]

(ii) **Applications for promotion and success rates by gender and grade** – comment on whether these differ for men and women and if they do explain what action may be taken. Where the number of women is small applicants may comment on specific examples of where women have been through the promotion process. Explain how potential candidates are identified.

For academics, the career structure is almost flat. Internal applications are welcomed for externally advertised posts such as statutory chairs, and internal candidates are interviewed if possible. Of the 4 chairs filled in the last five years, one internal male and one internal female were appointed; in addition an internal man has been appointed as a research professor.

At the titular level (no change in salary or duties), the University runs the "Recognition of Distinction" exercise approximately biennially. Academics are informed of the exercise when it is announced through the Division and the Head of Department. During the last five years (exercises in 2007/08 and 2010/11) 11 male academics applied to these; nine were awarded the title of Professor and two the title
of Reader. We are conscious that it is important to encourage women to put themselves forward and means of encouraging this are discussed under “Promotion and Career Development”.

Researchers may apply with the encouragement of their supervisor for an upgrading of scale but this is not common within the tenure of a single appointment unless there is a clear change in duties. Researchers are encouraged to discuss career plans with their supervisors and mechanisms are being put in place to help this. [Action Plan 4.3] Supervisors identify and encourage potential applicants to apply for more senior research positions or permanent academic posts.

[225 words]

b) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

(i) **Recruitment of staff** - comment on how the department’s recruitment processes ensure that female candidates are attracted to apply, and how the department ensures its short listing, selection processes and criteria comply with the university’s equal opportunities policies

We are conscious of the drop in the number of women between the research grade and the permanent academic grade, and the overall small number of female staff.

All adverts (for permanent and fixed term posts) confirm that the Department is an Equal Opportunities Employer. The job specification wording was reviewed and revised in 2008 using more informal language to encourage diversity through projecting a less formal model⁵. Explicit remarks on career breaks were added from 2012. Details of childcare (nurseries, playschemes for children) are given in the further particulars. It is made clear that quality is emphasised over quantity in making appointments and periods of maternity leave are taken into account in assessing each candidate’s academic career.

Chairs of selection panels must undergo training through the Oxford Learning Institute to ensure that the selection process complies fully with the university’s equal opportunities policy. Selection panels for academic posts are always constituted to include both men and women. However to avoid overload on the relatively few female academic staff, panels may include a female senior researcher or female member of the administrative staff for researchers.

Our success in biomedical engineering suggests that we are attracting women where there is a good pool of women applicants, but that we need strategies for seeking out women where the pool is smaller. Therefore one of the key actions in our action plan is to investigate mechanisms to assist our selection panels to search for qualified female candidates as part of the appointments process. [Action Plan 3.1]. We are also developing our recruitment strategies into new media and changing our online presence to attract women. [Action Plan 3.3].

[275 words]

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⁵ This followed work with the Equality Unit in the University Leadership Courses by Dr Probert Smith.
(ii) **Support for staff at key career transition points** – having identified key areas of attrition of female staff in the department, comment on any interventions, programmes and activities that support women at the crucial stages, such as personal development training, opportunities for networking, mentoring programmes and leadership training. Identify which have been found to work best at the different career stages.

**Undergraduate to postgraduate student**

With women making up 23.7% of undergraduate students and 24.8% of postgraduate students we do not have a major attrition point from undergraduate to postgraduate study.

All students have access to the University Careers Service and courses run by the Oxford Learning Institute. Courses may be tailored to particular groups. Students are made aware of courses during induction; ones of particular interest are also advertised in the departmental bulletin (including Springboard).

However we are still keen to encourage our best female undergraduates to consider an academic career. This is one of the drivers behind our decision to launch a “Women in Engineering” network within the Department – bringing together women at all stages in the academic pathway and ensuring that women interested or working in areas with fewer female colleagues can nevertheless feel part of a wider female network. [Action Plan 5.2] We are also intending to develop a leavers’ survey to provide us with more information about career choices by all our students but particularly women. [Action Plan 4.2]

[169 words]

**Graduate student to researcher**

The attrition rate from postgraduate to researcher is of concern to the Department, as this is the most common route to an academic post. Various support mechanisms are in place to encourage graduate students to feel comfortable about becoming researchers.

Where possible we encourage research groups to mix to provide role models, for example most research groups seat research students and researchers in the same or nearby areas to provide natural social and academic interaction. All groups run seminars and/or reading groups.

Training in core teaching skills including laboratory demonstrating is offered annually to all postgraduates and many assist in laboratory sessions, classes and (through colleges) in tutorial provision.

Involving researchers in graduate student supervision has been trialled in some research groups. Feedback has been very positive and the action plan includes consideration of how this model might be rolled out across the Department and more explicitly support the development of women engineers. This is seen as a potential win for both the postgraduates (providing role models) but also for the researchers (providing valuable experience). [Action Plan 2.4]

Financial support, both from the Department and from colleges, is available to allow graduate students to present their work at major international conferences to promote
their work and network. This is part of the way in which the Department encourages students to develop professional networks and potential collaborations.

The relative take-up of men and women in all of the above initiatives will be monitored and reported on in the Annual Report to ensure that there are no gender issues emerging. [Action Plan 1.1] However, the numbers of women applying for researcher positions is low and we need to understand why this is. The student survey will provide information on career aspirations and drivers, whilst the planned careers day will place a large emphasis on the option of becoming a researcher [Action Plan 4.2].

[311 words]

**Researcher to permanent academic**

The particular concern from women contributing to the focus groups was how they could manage an academic career with children. There is support available within the university in terms of maternity leave and nurseries and the flexible working arrangements that academics enjoy. In addition, within the Department, two recent researchers taking maternity leave have been encouraged (successfully) to apply for career development grants through the Division.

More generally it was clear from the focus groups that transition from researcher to permanent academic is an issue of major concern to researchers. To support staff through this transition the careers service is available to researchers as well as students and offers seminars. All job opportunities are advertised through the weekly electronic bulletin.

To address these concerns, actions already taken include the following.

- New structures (the Personal Development Review) have been put in place over the last academic year to strengthen and formalise the career guidance and appraisal given by supervisors.
- All researchers are invited to a discussion with the Personnel Manager six months before the end of a fixed term contract to discuss their plans.

Further actions include the following:

- A targeted careers day within the Department is being developed to run in 2012-2013 and this will include a session on balancing work and home. [Action Plan 4.2]
- A more extended induction is being developed to give a greater sense of belonging and to point researchers towards information. [Action Plan 5.4]
- A staff survey has been designed to identify any particular issues, including gender issues [Action Plan 5.3]
- The proposed women’s network will provide informal opportunities to raise questions. As this develops workshops around key concerns may be offered. [Action Plan 5.2]

[280 words]

**Lecturer to professor**

The criteria for promotion to titular or appointment to a statutory chair are based largely on research profile and achievement. The Department’s approach to ensuring
women are able to progress is two-fold – addressing flexibility in career and self-promotion.

Finding time to manage and maintain a large research programme is a particular problem in Oxford because of the dual responsibility towards both college and University in permanent academic posts. Greater flexibility for managing academic careers has been introduced recently through more extensive use of posts without college teaching responsibilities. Two of the permanent female academics with children have these posts, and another converted from to such a post on return from maternity leave. The Department is committed to continuing to support this approach.

Various studies have suggested that gender bias may arise if the promotions system relies on individuals making the first move (ref IoP “Women in University Physics Departments” known as the Juno Principle). To counter any potential gender imbalance in the “Recognition of Distinction” process the action plan includes a commitment from the Head of Department to specifically address this issue in the annual appraisal of each female member of the academic staff, creating a planned target for achieving this recognition (Juno Principle 3). [Action Plan 4.1]

[208 words]

Career development

a) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

(i) Promotion and career development - comment on the appraisal and career development process, and promotion criteria and whether these take into consideration responsibilities for teaching, research, administration, pastoral work and outreach work; is quality of work emphasised over quantity of work?

The Department is conscious of the need to manage careers for permanent academics. New members of staff are mentored through the probationary period. In the first year the teaching load is kept low to allow them to build up their research profile. Sabbatical leave is given for one term in seven. All staff are encouraged to go on career development courses through the Oxford Learning Institute.

The workload of all academic staff is reassessed annually. The points system (see Workload Model) takes into account teaching, research and administration (e.g., chair of a key committee). The work of the chair of the Athena SWAN Working Group is awarded points in the model. Pastoral work is recognised by the weighting given to college duties where pastoral duties are focussed. As departmental (rather than college) outreach is becoming more prominent a scheme is being developed to include this in the model.

The Department from time to time offers fixed term appointments (Departmental Lectureships) to allow new academics the chance to build up their research on a light (50%) teaching load. In 2007 it offered 3 appointments (two men, one woman) through Research Council-UK Fellowships, each starting with a light teaching load and leading to a permanent post in 2012 (see staff data).

All academics in permanent posts are invited to fill in a self-appraisal form annually. An interview with the Head of Department may be requested in any year with a
compulsory interview every 5th year. Statutory Professors are appraised by the Head of Division.

All lecturers are encouraged to apply for the Recognition of Distinction exercise. The criteria for promotion are made clear. Quality of work as assessed by external referees is emphasised over quantity, and periods of maternity leave are taken into account.

A small number of awards for excellence in teaching are given each year. All academics are invited to apply for the process through an e-mail to relevant staff from the Head of Department. Since 2008 awards have been given to 12 academics: 3 to women and 9 to men.

(ii) **Induction and training** - describe the support provided to new staff at all levels, as well as details of any gender equality training. To what extent are good employment practices in the institution, such as opportunities for networking, the flexible working policy, and professional and personal development opportunities promoted to staff from the outset?

New permanent academic staff are encouraged to think through a range of options for the types of support they need when they join. Formal support mechanisms include Departmental mentors, the Oxford Learning Institute (OLI) induction course, and support from their colleges. Staff are invited to a session for all new academics within the University to learn about the structure and working practices at Oxford. This is also an opportunity to meet non-engineering academics. They should also attend the Recruitment and Selection training which includes issues of gender and equality.

For new researchers, supervisors are encouraged to make their induction as relevant as possible. Supervisors are sent an induction checklist to remind them to cover day to day issues (e.g. health and safety, meeting colleagues etc.) as well as to think longer term and identify potential development opportunities and sources of support. Researchers are sent a link to the on-line course provided by OLI which gives a detailed induction into the University more widely. They are also invited to the “Researcher Welcome Event” which is a chance to network and learn more about the opportunities and support for Researchers within Oxford. The Department gives new researchers a copy of “The Balanced Researcher” Vitae guide. This was reviewed and recommended by existing research staff as a good starting point in considering work-life balance.

Staff and students in post are encouraged to attend courses run by the OLI for many aspects of their development. There are courses designed specifically for researchers such as “career management for research staff” as well as ones on managing time and personal development. The careers service also provide dedicated support for students as well as research staff and run events such as “Women in Academic Careers”.

(iii) **Support for female students** – describe the support (formal and informal) provided for female students to enable them to make the transition to a sustainable academic career, particularly from postgraduate to researcher,
such as mentoring, seminars and pastoral support and the right to request a female personal tutor. Comment on whether these activities are run by female staff and how this work is formally recognised by the department.

Pastoral and academic support for undergraduate students is provided largely through colleges through, for example, JCR women's officers and specific support activities. Within the Department the (female) Deputy Administrator (Academic) is available in the Faculty Office and operates an open door policy. Undergraduates have lectures by female as well as male lecturers in their first year. We take every opportunity for our female staff to act as role models for students. For instance, one of our new female academics who was appointed as a University Lecturer in 2011, is already lecturing our core mathematics material for the whole cohort of first year students. The Teaching Support Unit (responsible for about 50% labs and some coursework) includes a woman.

At the postgraduate level each student has a college adviser as well as a supervisor to provide additional support. The programme director of the CDT in Healthcare Innovation is female, and female academics are closely involved in teaching and administration of the CDT and MSc courses. The clustering of research groups offers opportunities for mutual support of female graduates and research workers.

Success of both genders is celebrated through the website and on internal display screens. Care is taken to ensure that female success is featured regularly. The Department’s website is being developed to feature women specifically in the new Athena SWAN section. [Action Plan 5.1]

[224 words]

Organisation and culture

a) Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.

(i) Male and female representation on committees
   – provide a breakdown by committee and explain any differences between male and female representation. Explain how potential members are identified.

Departmental strategy and resource allocation is the responsibility of the Departmental Committee. Academic business is the responsibility of the termly Faculty meeting. All academics also take part in at least one subject panel depending on their field of expertise which review and discuss teaching and research. In addition there are specific committees for undergraduate studies, post graduate studies, and admissions and access. There is a specific committee in charge of the Doctoral Training Centre. Liaison with students takes place at the Joint Consultative Committee. Membership of these committees is shown below. Student members vary from year to year and normally achieve a gender balance.

The Senior Management Team co-ordinates departmental business between meetings of the major committees. It comprises the Head and Deputy Head of Department, the Director of the IBME and the Head of Finance and Administration. For 2012-13 the Senior Management Team will be 50% female.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departmental Committee</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Membership 2009-10</th>
<th>Membership 2010-11</th>
<th>Membership 2011-2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Academic business</td>
<td>6F, 79M</td>
<td>6F, 74M</td>
<td>7F, 71M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Studies</td>
<td>Undergraduate courses</td>
<td>14M</td>
<td>12M</td>
<td>2F, 14M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate studies</td>
<td>Postgraduate courses apart from Doctoral Training Centre</td>
<td>1F, 10M + 1 student member</td>
<td>1F, 10M + 4 student members</td>
<td>2F, 12M, + 5 student members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions and Access Committee</td>
<td>Admissions procedures, outreach</td>
<td>1F, 7M</td>
<td>1F, 7M</td>
<td>2F, 7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Training Centre</td>
<td>Doctoral Training Centre</td>
<td>3F, 4M</td>
<td>3F, 4M + 2 student members</td>
<td>3F, 4M, + 2 student members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Consultative Committee</td>
<td>Student-led discussion of courses</td>
<td>3F, 6M + 9 student members</td>
<td>3F, 6M + 13 student members</td>
<td>2F, 6M + 7 student members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academic members of the Departmental Committee are the Head and Deputy Head of Department, the chairs of the major committees and up to 4 other academics to ensure that all research interests are reflected in the membership in any one year.

All academics are members of the Faculty Committee. The Committee also includes a few staff on senior research grades with specific teaching or research responsibilities.

The number of academic women on major committees reflects their small number. This is balanced by the major academic-related administrative jobs being held by women (the Head of Finance and Administration, Deputy Administrator (Academic) and Deputy Administrator (Research)).

Committee membership for posts other than ex-officio posts rotates at 3-5 year intervals.

The balance of women in strategic decision making roles will continue to be monitored. [Action Plan 1.1]

We encourage students to achieve a male-female balance in their representation on committees and over the years the balance is normally good.

[304 words]

(ii) **Female: male ratio of academic and research staff on fixed-term contracts and open-ended (permanent) contracts** –
Comment on any differences between male and female staff representation on fixed-term contracts and say what is being done to address them.

In December 2011 68% of women were on fixed term contracts compared with 57.5% of men. These numbers reflect the different ratios of academics to researchers between males and females. Researchers are employed on fixed term contracts reflecting the research funding that supports their post. No permanent academics are on fixed term contracts.
b) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

(i) Representation on decision-making committees - comment on evidence of gender equality in the mechanism for selecting representatives. What evidence is there that women are encouraged to sit on a range of influential committees inside and outside the department? How is the issue of ‘committee overload’ addressed where there are small numbers of female staff?

The Head of Department is elected for a fixed term by all the academics in the Department. The key posts of committee chairs, and membership of committees, rotate at 3 or 5 year intervals. Academics are given the opportunity to express interest in these roles formally in their appraisals or informally by expressing an interest to the Head of Department. Undergraduate Studies Committee has a number of representatives from the subject panels; these are normally taken by more recent appointees to give insight into the Department’s business. Specifically the Department is careful to ensure that female academics are not overburdened by committee membership to avoid administrative overload.

The Department encourages women as well as men to engage in leadership roles in the University to broaden their experience. The three academic women in post before 2006 all contribute to university management (University Research Committee, Conflict of Interests Panel, Student Disciplinary Panel, as Junior Proctor 2012-2013 and Assessor elect 2013-2014).

(ii) Workload model - describe the systems in place to ensure that workload allocations, including pastoral and administrative responsibilities (including the responsibility for work on women and science) are taken into account at appraisal and in promotion criteria. Comment on the rotation of responsibilities e.g. responsibilities with a heavy workload and those that are seen as good for an individual’s career

Engineering has operated a system of points to monitor and assess academic and administrative loading for over 15 years. Lecture courses and administrative responsibilities are rotated, and each year academic staff are invited annually to express preferences for teaching. The allocation of points across the Department is visible to all academics through the intranet. There are no gender differences: for example last year the differences in points by gender was less than 2% (Z=0.09). Points are awarded for teaching, research and administration including membership of committees. The lead role on Athena SWAN is awarded points in the system. Pastoral care is not specifically included in the model as this is primarily carried out through colleges – college duties as a whole are recognised.
Timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings - provide evidence of consideration for those with family responsibilities, for example what the department considers to be core hours and whether there is a more flexible system in place.

Times of key committee meetings are circulated at the start of term. All take place between the key hours of 9.00 and 4.00. Where possible the requirements of individuals on the committees are taken into consideration. For example, recently a committee was put forward to meet between 9-11 for a member of staff who drops off children at a school near the main Department in the morning.

Academic teaching (lectures and laboratories) of necessity extend over a relatively long working day from 9-6 in order to offer students a full range of options. There is sufficient flexibility that individuals with time constraints are accommodated within this by liaison with the Deputy Administrator (Academic). For example, biomedical lectures were rescheduled recently for a female member of staff who has children at school.

Seminars are organised by different groups in the Department, normally by area of interest, and all except biomedical engineering take place between 11 and 4. Public lectures may take place in early evening to allow members of the public or alumni to attend. In these cases they are advertised well in advance to allow academic staff who may want to attend to make suitable arrangements.

(iv) Culture - demonstrate how the department is female-friendly and inclusive. ‘Culture’ refers to the language, behaviours and other informal interactions that characterise the atmosphere of the department, and includes all staff and students.

A broad view of engineering, encompassing all engineering disciplines, is a core value of the Department which encourages a multi-disciplinary approach by its enthusiasm for the diversity of contribution that individuals bring. Academics from different disciplines collaborate effectively and in many cases pursue interests across traditional research boundaries. It is a matter of pride for the Department that individuals cannot be pigeon-holed into single subject boxes.

Contributions from all students, researchers and staff are welcomed and publicised. For example, post graduates are expected to produce a poster at the start of their second year; these are displayed in the atrium of one of the main buildings and are the focus of a social networking event. Large display screens publicise exciting work; any member of staff can ask to be featured. The Departmental Newsletter (with a wide circulation to current and previous staff and students) features numerous articles recognising not only academic achievements but offering a personal perspective. For example, the most recent issue included articles on some of the women students supported by Medtronics scholarships as well as an article about a previous female student and her role as an engineer supporting the Olympic and Paralympic Games. An email bulletin is issued weekly containing details of Departmental news and achievements, seminars and courses.

Most academics, including the Head of Department operate an open door policy. Academics usually have offices near their students and researchers rather than in a separate block so they are readily available. Students work in shared spaces rather than individual offices to encourage them to mix. Undergraduates normally do their
final year projects within a research group. Many research groups have informal gatherings. This provides a smaller base in the wider Department. Most staff and students have access to kitchens close to their research group; new buildings such as the IEB and the IBME include atria with common areas. The cafe on the main site is popular and open to all. There is an annual social event for all staff arranged by the Head of Department.

Staff can work non-standard office hours if this suits their family and childcare arrangement. For researchers the arrangement normally works informally by agreement with their supervisor. More formal procedures can be put in place for other staff with significant caring responsibilities to work part time or full time with flexibility on hours and days worked to fit in best with their caring responsibilities.

Recent expansion and reorganisation in the Department has encouraged clustering of academics, which helps to alleviate the difficulties for projects when a key member is on maternity leave, and helps students and researchers feel part of a larger group. For example the academics in the IBME have been brought together through the Wellcome-EPSRC Centre of Excellence in Biomedical Engineering, held in the name of four engineering academics (including one woman) but supporting the research in that area more widely through naming an additional five academics (including two women).

[490 words]

(v) Outreach activities - comment on the level of participation by female and male staff in outreach activities with schools and colleges and other centres. Describe who the programmes are aimed at, and how this activity is formally recognised as part of the workload model and in appraisal and promotion processes.

In Oxford undergraduate admissions are primarily the responsibility of the colleges and outreach is shared between the Central University, the Division, Departments and Colleges. Outreach activities are recorded across the University using a database, and between 1st Sept 2011 and 31st Aug 2012, there were around 2200 events (across all subjects) making contact with approximately 3300 schools recorded in the database. Many of our staff took part in these activities as fellows of particular colleges. (It is not possible to quantify those designed specifically for Women in Engineering, or those where there may be such an element within a larger event, due to the information recorded in the database. We have requested such a feature in the next upgrade to this facility.)

The MPLS Division runs a three day residential event for 25 Year12 girls and a further 35 day attendees at Easter. The aims of the course are to provide girls with positive role-models, inspire them to continue studying science, technology, engineering and maths subjects in higher education, and to encourage them to consider applying to Oxford University. Our staff contribute to this course.

In the Department we run pre-university outreach activities for both men and women through HEADSTART (EDT funded) and UNIQ (the university outreach activity). These are aimed at Year12 students. This year the Department’s UNIQ Programme was attended by 24 students – 10 women and 14 men. For the last three years we have also run Dragonfly which is specifically aimed at year 10 female students from local schools. (We are only one of seven Engineering Departments nationally to do so.) Increasing our numbers on Dragonfly from 15 to 30 is an action which we have already completed.
Woman (Academics, Researchers and Teaching Support Group) take major roles in these to provide senior role models; students also take part. Careers talks are run by the Engineering Society (a student led body) from time to time. Graduates are encouraged to take part in schools Outreach and Open Days. For example, it is a specific expectation for students from the Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT). The Department also supports work experience (year 11) students. Graduate courses are advertised through the website and the CDT holds both a located and a virtual open day.

374 words

Flexibility and managing career breaks

a) Provide data for the past three years (where possible with clearly labelled graphical illustrations) on the following with commentary on their significance and how they have affected action planning.

(i) Maternity return rate - comment on whether maternity return rate in the department has improved or deteriorated and any plans for further improvement. If the department is unable to provide a maternity return rate, please explain why. (NOTE: Personal information has been removed in this section to avoid identifying individuals)

As numbers taking maternity leave are so small data was analysed over 5 years from 2007 to 2012.

No permanent academics took maternity leave this period. Four researchers took maternity leave, two in 2007-8 and two in 2011-12. One of the earlier individuals returned to work. The two taking leave more recently both returned, and were assisted in restarting their research through an EPSRC Career Development Grant held by the University following encouragement from their supervisor and the Department’s Personnel Manager. One of these staff said “The scheme worked very well for me. After returning from maternity leave, it is a daunting task trying to manage motherhood with full time work in a highly dynamic research environment. The procedure for applying for this grant was very simple and the application form easy to fill in which is ideal for working mothers! “The grant will continue to be promoted by the Department and an on-going dialogue will be maintained with the individuals to support them through the return to work.

190 words

(ii) Paternity, adoption and parental leave uptake – comment on the uptake of paternity leave by grade and parental and adoption leave by gender and grade. Has this improved or deteriorated and what plans are there to improve further.

In the last 5 years 9 staff have taken paid paternity leave. All have returned to work. In the period no-one took adoption leave.

24 words
(iii) **Numbers of applications and success rates for flexible working by gender and grade** – comment on any disparities. Where the number of women in the department is small applicants may wish to comment on specific examples.

Because of the flexibility available, academics and researchers do not normally ask formally for flexible working but instead manage their own hours. For example an academic living in London is able to work at home during much of the vacation and to avoid rush hour travel for much of the week. Researchers with children commented in the surveys and focus groups that their work hours had been flexible when necessary.

[70 words]

b) For each of the areas below, explain what the key issues are in the department, what steps have been taken to address any imbalances, what success/impact has been achieved so far and what additional steps may be needed.

(i) **Flexible working** – comment on the numbers of staff working flexibly and their grades and gender, whether there is a formal or informal system, the support and training provided for managers in promoting and managing flexible working arrangements, and how the department raises awareness of the options available.

Flexible working is available for both men and women and the opportunities are well understood. It is common for staff (academic and research) to work non-standard office hours if this suits their family and childcare arrangement. For researchers the arrangement normally works informally by agreement with their supervisor. Procedures are in place for other staff with significant caring responsibilities (for example in the workshops or teaching support group) to work part time or full time with flexibility on hours and days worked to fit in best with their caring responsibilities. For example a member of staff in the teaching support group changed from full time to part time work following the birth of her children and works only during school terms. The Department has been sympathetic towards occasional requests for compassionate leave because of caring responsibilities (e.g., elderly parents, sick children).

The table below shows the July snapshot for part time posts. The figures for females correspond to 0 or 1 person; for males to 3-5 people respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible as % of whole</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>125</td>
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<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible as % of whole</td>
<td>6 (4.3%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (2.7%)</td>
<td>3 (2.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[168 words]

(ii) **Cover for maternity and adoption leave and support on return** – explain what the department does, beyond the university maternity policy package, to support female staff before they go on maternity leave, arrangements for
covering work during absence, and to help them achieve a suitable work-life balance on their return.

The Department is fully aware of the importance of maintaining links with the research community during maternity leave and arrangements are always discussed with the individual concerned. To support researchers over maternity leave and their return, supervisors are made aware of good practice by Personnel when one of their researchers asks for leave. Information about university policy is readily available on the website.

Where possible a safety assessment is put in place to allow staff on maternity leave to bring their babies with them if they have expressed a wish for occasional “Keep in Touch” meetings. Graduate students can officially suspend their studies to take a period of maternity leave.

The return from leave has been helped though encouraging relevant staff to apply for funds as mentioned above. The two most recent researchers taking maternity leave were awarded grants to pay for research assistance, including conducting fieldwork away from Oxford. Actions are planned to enhance return further through offering mentoring. [Action Plan 4.4]

Sabbatical leave is normally given at the rate of one term in every seven to academics. It has been agreed that some flexibility may be introduced to help people rebuild their research after coming back from a period of sustained leave such as maternity or compassionate leave.

[210 words]

5. **Any other comments** (280 words)

Please comment here on any other elements which are relevant to the application, e.g. other SET-specific initiatives of special interest that have not been covered in the previous sections. Include any other relevant data (e.g. results from staff surveys), provide a commentary on it and indicate how it is planned to address any gender disparities identified.

The self assessment exercise has made us reflect over the whole range of activities in the Department. It has become clear that there are many examples of good practice, in particular in the bio-medical engineering area, but that these have not always been embedded into the planning and monitoring arrangements within the whole Department. In the action plan we address this through the commitment to establishing and reviewing a core set of data on gender issues and to having the Athena SWAN Working Group as one of the committees of the Department to oversee the action plan.

Although the picture is improving we have some concerns about the performance of female students at specific stages in their undergraduate and post graduate careers.

We have been concerned for many years over the lack of women applicants in many areas of engineering for jobs as researchers and academics. These are long term issues which we are addressing through reviewing our own descriptions and promotion of ourselves (e.g., on the web), appointing women Visiting Professors/Associates to provide a better balance in areas with few females and setting up search procedures in appointments.
Researchers are the group which have been identified with particular concerns, some gender neutral but others pertaining especially to females. Again the action plan identifies steps to be taken here. It is hoped the planned women’s network will be particularly beneficial to women in this group.

We are a large Department based on several sites. Improving information in various ways and encouraging a sense of belonging, has also been identified as an area for improvement and the development of web pages and information packs are described in the Action Plan.

[280 words]

6. Action plan

Provide an action plan as an appendix. An action plan template is available on the Athena SWAN website.

The Action Plan should be a table or a spreadsheet comprising actions to address the priorities identified by the analysis of relevant data presented in this application, success/outcome measures, the post holder responsible for each action and a timeline for completion. The Plan should cover current initiatives and your aspirations for the next three years.

The action plan does not need to cover all areas at Bronze; however the expectation is that the department will have the organisational structure to move forward, including collecting the necessary data.

Following the analysis presented in the report, the key issues for the department for either action or monitoring are felt to be:

A. The lack to date of a regular, comprehensive analysis of data by gender across all departmental activities to identify if there are issues which need to be addressed.
B. The performance of female students at key stages in Prelims and the proportion of women completing DPhils. (The proportion of women achieving a First is also being monitored closely.)
C. The under-representation of women in permanent academic positions especially in non-biomedical areas.
D. The concerns of female researchers about career prospects, guidance and work life balance

These are addressed in the attached action plan. The responsibility for actions is embedded in the committee system in the department primarily through committee chairs: the Head of Department, the Head of Faculty, the Head of Graduate Studies as well as the key administrative positions: Head of Finance and Administration, Deputy Administrator (Academic) and Personnel Manager.

The action plan is in four parts to address the points above, with a fifth part to ensure that the Departmental culture supports females and males alike:

1. Collection and presentation of comprehensive data
2. Undergraduate and postgraduate courses
3. Researcher and Academic Recruitment
4. Career Development
5. Culture
Where applicable success measures are set out as two elements: a short term target such as the production of a report leading to a longer term success measure in closing a specified gender gap.