



Department Application Bronze Award



Athena SWAN Bronze Department Award Application

The Open University
Knowledge Media Institute

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GUIDANCE FOR ATHENA SWAN ASSESSMENT PANELS

ON OPEN UNIVERSITY SUBMISSIONS

(REVISED NOVEMBER 2016)

This is a standard Guidance document that has been agreed by Athena SWAN to accompany all OU submissions. Please note that it is not included in the word count.

As a distance learning institution, the staffing structure and student body of the Open University (OU) is different from that of a conventional university. As such, the information and terminology presented in OU Athena SWAN submissions may be unfamiliar to Assessment Panels. This guidance therefore aims to give additional background information to assist panels in completing their assessment of OU submissions.

ATTENTION

Please, note that the Knowledge Media institute is a very special case within the OU, since **we are not a department but a research institute**. However, according to the Athena SWAN guidelines¹ we do not qualify as research institute since we are not independent of a higher education institution (HEI), in this case, the OU. Hence we are submitting this application as department, but please note we only have students at postgraduate level, i.e., PhDs and (ii) while we do contribute to teaching delivery (webcasts, science labs, etc.) we do not run any undergraduate or postgraduate taught courses. Hence all information about students (except PhD students) and lecturers contained in this pre-approved guidance, as well as in the Athena SWAN department application form, do not apply to this application.

1. Open University Academic Staff

OU Academic staff fall into two categories: *Central Academics* and *Regional Academics*.

The majority of the OU's academic staff are based on campus in Milton Keynes. These staff are referred to as **Central Academics** and carry out teaching, administration and research like academics at other institutions. Together with Research Associates and Fellows, they form the OU's research base. However, since the OU is a distance learning institution, the teaching role of Central Academics is different from academics at other universities. Rather than directly teaching students, Central Academics develop teaching materials and manage the delivery and assessment of the modules they have written. Direct teaching of students is the responsibility of Associate Lecturers (see below).

Since the OU provides education to students across the UK, the OU also employs almost 200 **Regional Academics** (also known as Staff Tutors) who are employed by individual Schools on the same salary scale as Central Academics. They also carry out

¹ <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Research-Institutes-handbook-July-2016.pdf>

teaching, administration and research but have different terms and conditions. In particular they are allowed less research time than Central Academics, and have a higher administrative load, because part of their role is to appoint and manage Associate Lecturers.

Associate Lecturers

The OU employs approximately 6000 Associate Lecturers (ALs) located across the UK to carry out direct teaching of undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. ALs are appointed on short term part-time contracts, and on a module-by-module basis, with many holding substantive posts with other employers. Their contracts with the OU do not include production of course materials or research, and ALs are managed at Faculty level rather than by Schools. Since the contracts and career development of ALs remain beyond the responsibility of Schools, there is limited scope for including this staff group within School Athena SWAN submissions. However, as ALs are the main point of contact with the university for students, School submissions will provide basic data including a gender analysis of ALs who are employed to work on relevant modules.

2. OU Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students

The OU is the largest UK University, with over 186,000 undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, all of whom study part-time and at a distance. There are also around 1000 full-time and part-time Postgraduate Research students. The University operates an open access policy, meaning it accepts all applicants who apply to study at undergraduate level, without any academic prerequisites. Most Open University students are in employment and are mature students (only 5% of students are under 20). They are based in all parts of the UK, and there are also 10,000 non-UK based students. Around 20,000 OU students (i.e. more than one in ten) have declared disabilities.

Study mode

Students are taught via the OU's unique model of distance learning known as 'supported open learning'. Course materials are studied via a number of different media, including both on-line and printed material. Students are allocated to an Associate Lecturer who provides academic expertise, guidance and feedback individually and as part of a tutor group. Tutor groups meet via on-line conferencing as well as at face to face tutorials, which usually take place in the evenings or at weekends. There are also residential schools for some modules. Full time funded PhD students are based at the Milton Keynes campus while part time research students (who are usually self-funded) can attend supervision and research seminars either face to face or remotely.

Modules and Qualifications

Historically, OU students have registered on discrete modules which they use to build up credits towards a qualification. Since 2012, the OU has begun to move towards qualification-based, rather than module-based, degrees, with students registering for a named qualification from the outset. However, as this is a relatively recent development, there remain a large number of students who are still part way through a

module-based pathway, as students usually take at least 6 years to complete an undergraduate degree. Moreover, individual modules may be common to a number of different qualifications, thus individual Schools often contribute towards degree attainment outside of the named qualifications reported in the data.

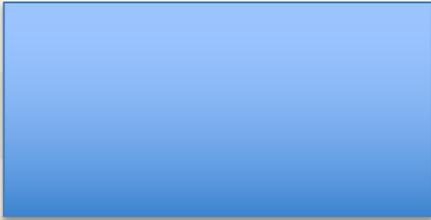
For these two reasons, panels should note that OU School submissions will consider and reflect on student data at a module level, as well as qualification outcomes.

Table 1. Summary of academic and research staff categories

Staff Category	Contract type	Managing Unit	Duties	Location
Central Academic	Usually permanent either part time or fulltime	School	Teaching Administration Research	Milton Keynes
Regional Academic	Usually permanent – either part time or full time	School	Mainly administration and teaching plus some Research	Either home based or at regional/ national centre
Researcher (Associate and Fellow)	Usually fixed term – either part time or full time	School	Research only	Milton Keynes
Associate Lecturer	Fixed term part time	Faculty Student Support Team	Teaching only	Home based

3. Flexible working

The nature of the OU's teaching and learning model provides the flexibility for students to study where and when they choose, to fit in with jobs, families and other commitments. This also means that academics and researchers have always had a high level of flexibility about their working arrangements and this approach continues to be a unique part of the working culture of the OU. Therefore panels should be aware that this is the reason that there have been very few formal applications for flexible working among academic and research staff. Regional Academics make particularly extensive use of flexible working because much of their work with the ALs necessarily takes place outside conventional office hours. For Regional Academics, remote participation at meetings is also facilitated and encouraged using audio and video conferencing, so it is often not necessary to be physically at the Milton Keynes campus.

Name of institution	The Open University
Department	Knowledge Media Institute
Focus of department	STEMM
Date of application	November 2017
Award Level	Bronze
Institution Athena SWAN award	Date:2013 Level:Bronze
Contact for application Must be based in the department	
Email	
Telephone	
Departmental website	http://kmi.open.ac.uk

1. LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT FROM THE HOD

Knowledge Media Institute

The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
United Kingdom



15th November 2017

I am delighted to have the opportunity to support our application for an Athena SWAN Bronze award. Since its inception the OU has taken very seriously its responsibility to provide equality of opportunity in all aspects of its work, and our engagement with Athena SWAN has enabled us to reflect upon our practices to ensure we demonstrate this commitment.

KMi was conceived just over 20 years ago to help the OU succeed in its promotion of educational opportunity and social justice mission in the age of emerging new technologies. We have also sought to be true to the OU's goals centred around inclusivity and openness. I am proud that throughout our history lab members have come from diverse backgrounds - typically containing around 20 distinct nationalities within our 60-80 personnel. We strongly believe that our diversity is one of our core strengths that makes KMi both a very successful institute and a highly motivating place to be.

Our successes in diversity of nationality and ethnicity however, has not been reflected in gender equality. Since becoming lab Director two years ago I have been determined to improve this situation. Having 'grown up' academically in the Computing area, starting out as an undergraduate in the 1980s at the Computing Department at the University of Warwick, I have always been concerned by the sheer scale of the gender imbalance.

I see this submission as one of many steps that we have to take to improve the situation locally. Besides setting up our Athena SWAN Committee other actions that I have taken since becoming lab Director have been to set up a postdoctoral review process, which so far has resulted in two female members of staff becoming

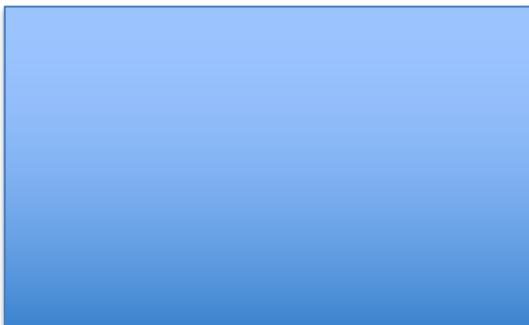
permanent and being now part of KMi's Management Board (which oversees the strategic and operational directions for the lab). I have also added equality and diversity as a standing board agenda item.

As indicated by the Action Plan there remains a lot to do. Our priority will be to revise our induction procedures to emphasise reward and promotion procedures, improve our recruitment reach to female friendly venues and install improved diversity related data collection and analysis procedures.

As lab Director I will ensure that all issues and challenges raised by our Athena SWAN Self Assessment Team are given the highest priority and are supported by all our leadership, are made aware to all lab members and are backed by sufficient resources whenever deemed necessary. Having been a member of KMi since its inception over 20 years ago and having served as Director for just over two years I fully understand that increased diversity equates to increased staff performance, motivation and general well-being.

As KMi Director I certify that the information presented in the application (including qualitative and quantitative data) is an honest, accurate and true representation of our institute.

Yours faithfully



Word count: 492

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Knowledge Media Institute (KMi) was set up in 1995 in recognition of the need for The Open University (OU) to be at the forefront of research and development in a convergence of areas that impacted on the OU's very nature: Cognitive and Learning Sciences, Artificial Intelligence and Semantic Technologies, and Multimedia. The breadth of subjects covered by the department leads to a vibrant and diverse academic community with PhD students benefitting from the interdisciplinary nature of our research projects.

KMi is a research institute and therefore differs from other OU departments in two key elements: (i) we only have students at postgraduate level, i.e., PhDs and (ii) while we do contribute to teaching delivery (webcasts, science labs, etc.) we do not run any undergraduate or postgraduate taught courses.

Following a major restructuring across the OU, KMi became part of the new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) Faculty on 1st of August 2016. This restructuring is still in progress, but KMi is already benefiting from some of the policies and practices of the faculty, and from the close collaboration with other departments within the faculty who have already obtained their Bronze and Silver Athena SWAN awards.

As of August 2017 the department has 31 academics (24 male, 7 female), 25 academic and support staff (18 male, 7 female) and 18 PhD students (11 male, 7 female) - see Figures 2, 3 and 4. Our postgraduate research students comprise full time students who are based on campus and part time students who study remotely. Our academic staff is divided in research teams, each of the teams led by a senior academic. All research teams receive support from our academic and support staff, which is mainly divided into: (i) the admin team, which is in charge of project support and administration, (ii) the systems team, who support KMi's bespoke software and infrastructure and, (iii) the development team who focus on web systems development and graphic design. Note that five main categories exist within our research staff: PB (professor) AC4 (senior research fellow / reader) AC3 (research fellow) AC2 (research associate) AC1 (research assistant).



Fig 1: Reflection of KMi's diversity

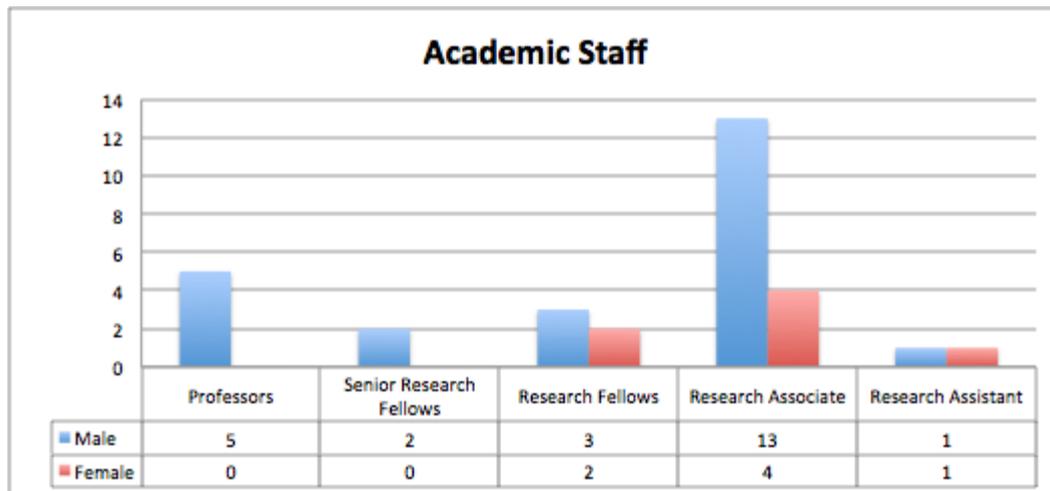


Fig 2: Academic staff

There is a higher ratio of male academics (77.4%) than female academics (22.6%). This ratio is very similar to the one reported in the latest HE stats report² for academic staff in ITCS (IT, systems sciences, computer software engineering), 22.2% females vs. 77.8% males. However, it is worth highlighting the underrepresentation of female academics in senior posts (i.e., professors and senior research fellows). These elements will be further discussed in the following sections.

² <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-in-higher-education-statistical-report-2016/>

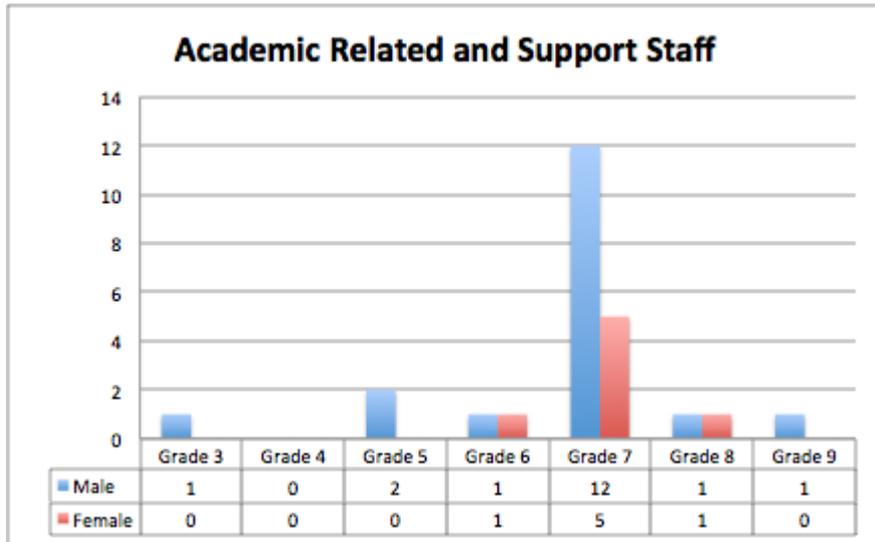


Fig 3: Academic Related and Support Staff (Secretarial and Clerical, Technical, and Craft Staff)

Within the academic related and support staff we observe 72% male and 28% female. The admin team is predominantly female, with only two male representatives (25%). The systems and development teams are predominantly male, with only one female representative (17%).

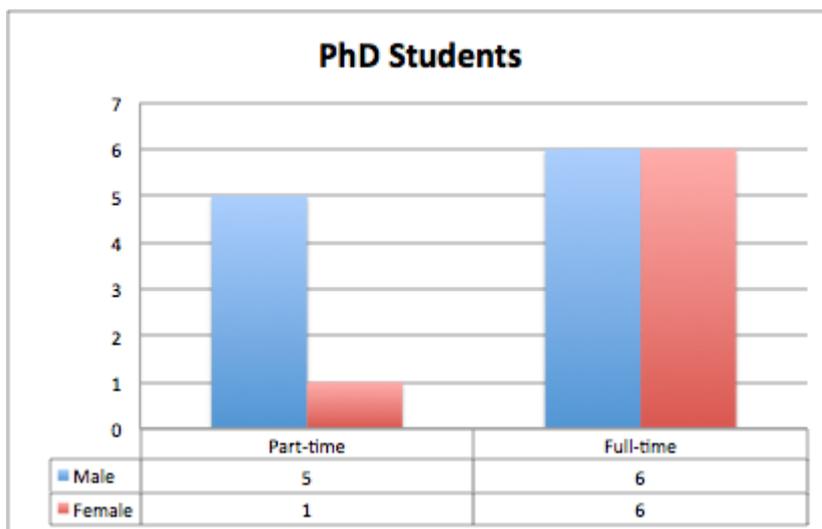


Fig 4: PhD students

The distribution among full-time PhD students is balanced (50% male vs. 50% female). This ratio is less balanced for part-time students, (83% male vs. 17% female).

Word count: 492

3. THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

(i) Description of the self-assessment team

The Self-Assessment Team (SAT) is made up of women and men at different career stages and from different staff categories within KMi:

Academic members		
Name	Title	Description

PhD students		
Name	Title	Description

Academic Related and Support Staff		

Table 1: Self-assessment team

The SAT is also very grateful to [redacted] [redacted] has provided the SAT with invaluable guidance and support from the beginning of this application, and has been the contact point between KMi and other OU departments.

(ii) **An account of the self-assessment process**

The SAT was created following an initial assessment conducted by [redacted] in May 2016 and it was initially composed by six members, selected considering a wide representation from students, academics and support staff. The data analysis and the various actions that the SAT started putting in place in the lab inspired other members to join the team. We are proud to say that we are now sixteen very engaged members proactively contributing to this initiative.

SAT meetings take place monthly and are arranged using doodle to ensure a large participation. The outcomes and actions are formally recorded in a common Google drive folder. Sub-groups have also been meeting to initiate the actions that are detailed in the Action Plan of this proposal.

We have also had separate meetings with the Chairs of other departmental SATs, who have provided invaluable advice, data and documents to this submission. The Chair is

also a member of the University Gender Equality Steering Group. This has helped to keep the department's Action Plan aligned with the University's Action Plan.

The SAT has collected the necessary data to assess the status of the department and put forward a targeted Action Plan. **Data** on personnel, including gender, grades, salary and promotions has been obtained **up to 10 years back (2007)**. The rest of the data was obtained for the past three years.

In addition to the raw data used to obtain a quantitative picture of the department we designed two different **questionnaires**; one for the **current KMi members**, including students and staff, and one for **the past KMi members**.³ The first one included 46 questions, exploring participants' beliefs on: career development, departmental culture and organisation, mentoring, flexible working, career breaks and maternity/paternity leave, equality. It received 51 responses (33 male / 17 female / 2 own description), 75% response rate. The second one had 18 questions, exploring the reasons why people left the department and if they were related to equality matters. It was sent to 56 ex-members and received 48 answers (18 female / 30 male), 86% response rate. The design of the questionnaires reflected the objectives of the Athena Swan Charter. Feedback on these questionnaires was received by a senior member of the University's STEM Gender Equality Working Group and by KMi's Management Board. **Twenty two hours of informal interviews** followed those questionnaires with volunteers who wanted to provide additional feedback.

(iii) Plans for the future of the self-assessment team

The SAT will continue to meet monthly to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan. Each item on the Action Plan will have a lead person who will be responsible for reporting on progress at SAT meetings.

As part of KMi's commitment to Athena SWAN objectives, the Management Board has decided to make Athena SWAN related issues, actions and initiatives a regular agenda item and support these initiatives with an allocated budget of 2,000 pounds for the next year. The SAT Chair ([REDACTED]) will report monthly on their progress to KMi's Management Board.

Additionally, the Management Board has also decided to include Athena SWAN as part of our 'town' meetings. Town meetings take place in the department once every quarter and serve as an opportunity to discuss a variety of issues with the whole unit, and to gather feedback from every lab member. The SAT Chair will be reporting at these meetings to keep lab members informed and include them into the Athena SWAN actions. Results of the analyses conducted by the SAT, as well as our planned

³ http://projects.kmi.open.ac.uk/athena-swan/pdf/KMi_athena_swan_survey_exisiting_members.pdf
http://projects.kmi.open.ac.uk/athena-swan/pdf/KMi_athena_swan_survey_previous_members.pdf

initiatives are also communicated to the entire unit via our internal mailing list. Actions involving public talks and workshops are also communicated via our social media channels (@kmiou in Twitter and <https://www.facebook.com/KnowledgeMediaInstitute/> on Facebook). Members of other departments are also invited to these talks and workshops so that initiatives are shared.

KMi's SAT chair represents the department on the University's Gender Equality Steering Group, which in turn reports to senior management, thus ensuring the department's Athena SWAN work connects to wider university strategies on gender equality and the department is informed of news and developments. This also allows KMi to have a closer connection and cooperation with the SATs of other departments, and the university SAT, ensuring common initiatives are taken forward.

Action Plan 1.1 Establish an annual monthly cycle of SAT meetings

Action Plan 1.2 Establish an annual cycle of SAT and reporting schedule to departmental management team as part of our monthly Management Board meetings

Action Plan 1.3 Establish an annual cycle of SAT and reporting schedule to the entire department as part of our tri-monthly town meetings

Action Plan 1.4 Investigate possibilities to obtain additional budget for Athena SWAN activities via EU and national funding programs

Word count: 777

4. A PICTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT

KMi is a very special case within the OU, since **we are not a department but a research institute**. In August 2016 the institute joined the STEM Faculty. According to the Athena SWAN guidelines⁴ we do not qualify as research institute since we are not independent of a higher education institution (HEI), but please note **we do not have lecturers or undergraduate students**. Hence all information about students (except PhD students), do not apply to this application.

4.1. Student data

- (i) Numbers of men and women on access or foundation courses

Not applicable.

- (ii) Numbers of undergraduate students by gender

Not applicable.

- (iii) Numbers of men and women on postgraduate taught degrees

Not applicable.

- (iv) Numbers of men and women on postgraduate research degrees

	2015			2016			2017		
	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W
Full time	4	7	36%	4	8	33%	6	6	50%
Part time	1	5	16%	1	4	20%	1	5	16%

Table 2: Numbers of men (M) and women (W) in full and part time PhD positions

Table 2 reflects the number of full and part time students in KMi. At the moment, 50% of our full-time PhD students are female, an increase from previous years. Among part-time students there are fewer women (16%). Part-time students are usually self-funded, so this may be one reason for this disparity.

Action Plan 2.1 Investigate reasons for low recruitment of part-time female postgraduate research students. Survey and interview current part-time students (all genders) to explore their experiences. Use the results of this study to inform further actions

⁴ <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Research-Institutes-handbook-July-2016.pdf>

Applications	2015			2016			2017		
	W	M	%W	W	M	%W	W	M	%W
Applications	8	39	17%	8	13	40%	6	12	33%
Shortlisted	1	13	7%	7	4	64%	4	8	33%
Selected	0	2	0%	4	1	80%	0	1	0%

Table 3: Applications and offers for postgraduate research degrees (Full time)

Table 3 reflects the number of applicants received during the last three years. The numbers for 2015 are higher since special funding was provided to open 5 additional PhD positions for the data science program, shared between KMi and the Computing department. The percentage of female applicants was 17% in 2015. In the last 2 years female applicants have increased (40% and 33% respectively), as well as their likelihood to be shortlisted and selected.

It is relevant to highlight that KMi has three types of studentships: (a) *KMi-funded*, (b) *externally-funded* (i.e., funded by EU or national funding programs) and (c) *self-funded*. For the first two types, topics are proposed and advertised via OU and KMi websites, mailing lists and research networks, as well as employment and PhD-specific websites (e.g. jobs.ac.uk, findaphd.com), but not yet on female-specific groups.

Action Plan 3.1 Identify websites, groups and institutions dedicated to women in STEM. Use the created list to promote KMi positions through those channels

Action Plan 3.3 Ensure that job adverts include wording that particularly encourages women to apply

Action Plan 2.5 Improve the KMi website recruitment pages and postgraduate area. Provide information on all the opportunities available. Consider how we can signpost/advertise these opportunities more effectively

Action Plan 3.4 Modify the KMi website to reflect why working at KMi and the OU can be very attractive to women (commitment to Athena SWAN, training opportunities, flexible working, etc.)

Action Plan 3.5 Modify the KMi website to add visibility to KMi's female researchers and role models

The academic proposers of each PhD topic shortlist candidates for interview. They provide a reason for rejection of candidates they do not wish to shortlist in line with the rejection categories provided by the Research Degrees Office. The Postgraduate

Research Tutor, and occasionally a further member of Management Board, sits on all interview panels to ensure oversight and consistency of the interview process. At least one member of the proposed supervision team also sits on the panel. Although the OU offers online training on recruitment and selection,⁵ we want to complement and enhance this training by a face-to-face workshop focused on unconscious bias and recruitment practices.

Action Plan 3.2 Design and conduct a face-to-face workshop focused on unconscious bias and recruitment practices. Provide this workshop once a year to everyone in KMi who is likely to be in an interview panel. Complement this workshop with the current online course on recruitment, selection and interviewing provided at the OU

Once the interviews have been completed, the applicants are ranked according to a well-defined set of criteria including: qualifications, knowledge and experience of the research area; adequate levels of English (IELTS); training needs and whether they can be met; etc. Offers are then made to the highest ranked candidates. If an offer is rejected, then an offer can be made to other applicants above the cut-off point on the list.

For *Self-funded PhDs*, applicants may approach KMi with their own funding for either full-time or part-time study. In this case, the Postgraduate Research Tutor assists them in finding suitable supervisors. The application and interview process is conducted as above.

Started-finished 2006-2017				Unsuccessful		Successful			
M	F	%M	%F	M	F	M	F	%M	%F
15	10	60%	40%	6	3	11	7	73%	70%

Table 4: PhD completion rates by gender considering the time span 2006-2017

For degree completion rates (Table 4) we have analysed data for all the PhD students who started in 2006 onwards and for which revised end-date was 2017. From a total of 25 PhD students (15 male and 10 female) 6 males and 3 females have not completed it.

Action Plan 2.2 Investigate reasons for students dropping their PhD studies and the different factors that affect male and female. Use the results of this study to inform further actions

In compiling this data, we found that our departmental records on PhD applications, offers and acceptances were not easily available.

Action Plan 1.6 Put in place a system for regularly collecting and reviewing gender data on the recruitment, progression and attainment of students

⁵ <https://thelearningcentre.learningpool.com/enrol/index.php?id=97>

(v) Progression pipeline between undergraduate and postgraduate student levels

KMi does not run any taught courses and therefore does not have any pipeline from taught courses to postgraduate research study. We intend to work with other departments that run taught courses in relevant areas (such as computing) to increase the visibility of our studentships to current OU students.

Action Plan 2.3 Identify points of contact with different STEM departments at the OU to target female Master students when advertising KMi PhD positions. Liaise with 2.1, 2.4, and 2.5 to develop a strategic approach to recruitment

Action Plan 2.4 Identify points of contact with women Associate Lecturers, within the STEM faculty, but also in other working groups and communities of practice, such as WomenAtOU on Yammer. Liaise with 2.1, 2.3 and 2.5 to develop a strategic approach to recruitment

4.2. Academic and research staff data

(i) Academic staff by grade, contract function and gender: research-only, teaching and research or teaching-only

The composition of research staff by role and gender over the past eleven years is illustrated in Figures 5 to 10. The data does not differentiate between full and part-time staff. According to our records, only a handful of members of KMi requested to become part-time and only for short periods of time (months), this is not reflected in yearly reporting. As we go forward with regular data reporting, we plan to collate and analyse this data.

Action Plan 1.5 Investigate a way of incorporating part-time staff data as part of our data collection

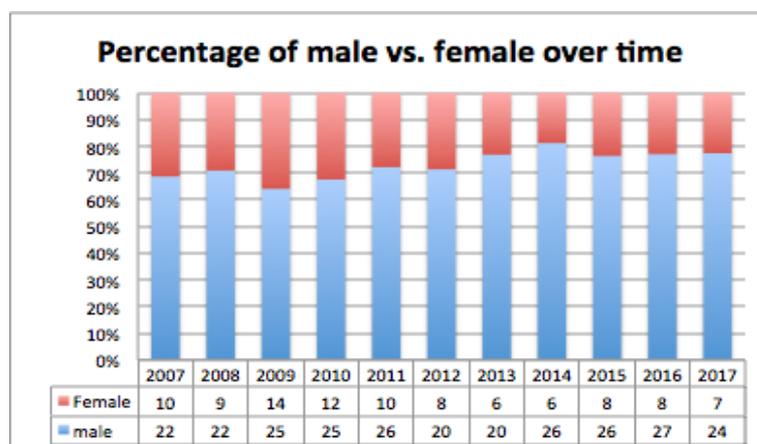


Fig 5: Percentage of academic staff by gender over the past 11 years

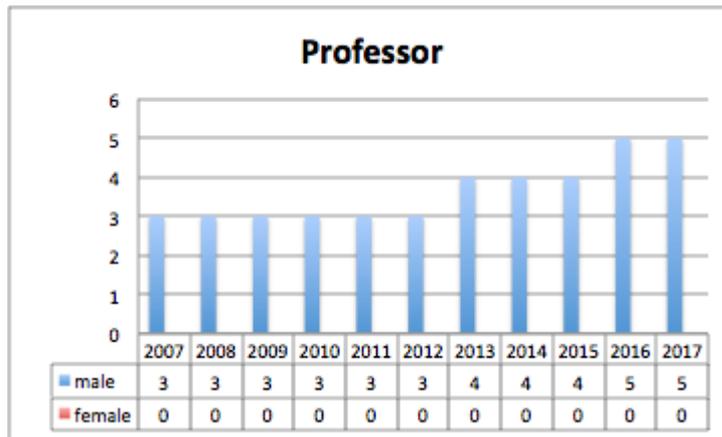


Fig 6: Number of professors by gender over the past 11 years

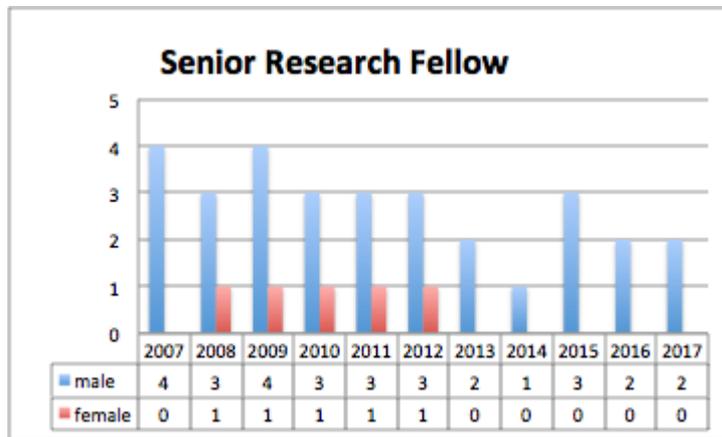


Fig 7: Number of senior research fellows by gender over the past 11 years

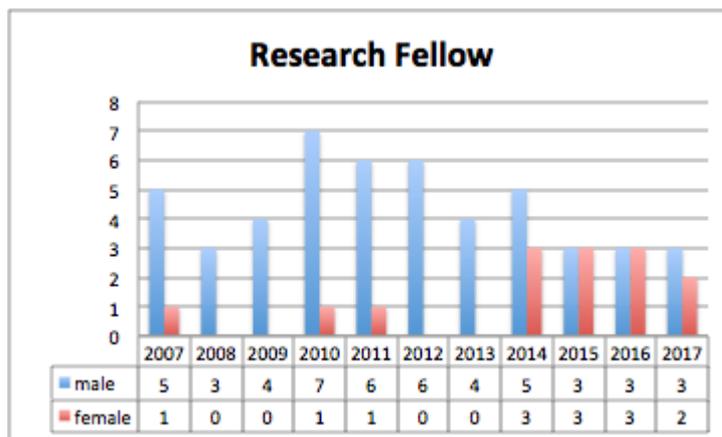


Fig 8: Number of research fellows by gender over the past 11 years

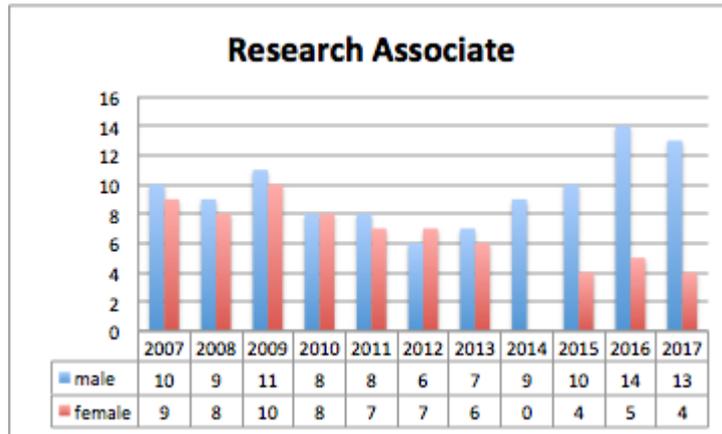


Fig 9: Number of research associates by gender over the past 11 years

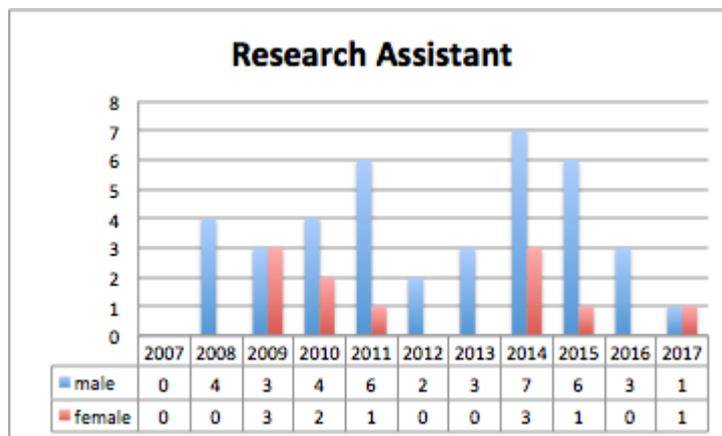


Fig 10: Number of research assistants by gender over the past 11 years

The following issues can be observed:

- [1] While the current percentage of female academics is 22.6%, which is similar to the average of ITCS (22.2% females) according to the latest 2016 HE stats report,⁶ KMi has suffered a decrease, being 36% in 2009.
- [2] There has not been any senior female academic at professorial level for the past 11 years. Since 2012 there is also no female representation at a senior research fellow level. The underrepresentation of female academics in senior posts is a well-known problem in higher education institutions.⁷
- [3] In the past three years, there has been an increase of female research fellows, but a decrease in the number of research associates and research assistants.

⁶ <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-in-higher-education-statistical-report-2016/>

⁷ <https://www.ses.unam.mx/curso2015/pdf/23oct-Morley.pdf>

Attracting females to the department and improving their retention along the different stages of the pipeline, as well as supporting and encouraging the promotion of females to higher academic positions, are key aspects of our Athena plan. We introduce here our actions for attracting female members. Our actions for improving retention are presented in the following sections.

Action Plan 3.1 Identify websites, groups and institutions dedicated to women in STEM. Use the created list to promote KMi positions through those channels

Action Plan 3.3 Ensure that job adverts include wording that particularly encourages women to apply

Action Plan 3.4 Modify the KMi website to reflect why working at KMi and the OU can be very attractive to women (commitment to Athena SWAN, training opportunities, flexible working, etc.)

Action Plan 3.5 Modify the KMi website to add visibility to KMi's female researchers and role models

(ii) [Academic and research staff by grade on fixed-term, open-ended/permanent and zero-hour contracts by gender](#)

Figures 11 and 12 show a high percentage of females in fixed-term contracts. The lack of female academics in senior positions exacerbates the problem, since senior positions are generally permanent.

Due to the research focus of the department, and our financial dependency on research grants, for a person to be made permanent he or she needs to justify research independence and financial stability for a sustainable period of time (i.e., have been Principal Investigator (PI) in at least one project and demonstrate a healthy flow of research grants). The fact that multiple research grant schemes do not accept PIs that do not hold a permanent position (or only in those cases where the fixed-term contracts are longer than the duration of the grant) makes the problem even more serious. We are very aware that short-term contracts can have a negative impact on everyone's career progression,⁸ and that female academics are even more affected by them.⁹ Hence the department is very committed to fix this issue.

Three years ago, the HoD, in collaboration with the Staffing Committee, initiated an annual postdoctoral review process, in which the CVs of all AC2s and AC3s in fixed-term contracts are assessed according to a pre-defined set of criteria (publications, research grants, supervision, visibility, etc.). As a result of this process, two female members of staff were encouraged and supported to write their cases and are now permanent members of staff. As part of KMi's commitment, we will support and further develop this process, introducing actions for strategic career planning.

⁸https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7995/Precarious-work-in-higher-education-a-snapshot-of-insecure-contracts-and-institutional-attitudes-Apr-16/pdf/ucu_precariouscontract_hereport_apr16.pdf

⁹ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/employment>

Action Plan 4.2 KMi's Staffing Committee will conduct an annual postdoctoral review (by reviewing the CVs of all KMi's postdocs) to ensure that female academics are encouraged to apply for promotions/permanency once they meet the criteria and do not wait longer than necessary

Action Plan 4.3. In conjunction to the University's Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) process, an annual career planning exercise will be conducted as a result of Action Plan 4.2. The aim is to provide strategic career advice and to ensure that career efforts are concentrated in the right path to obtain promotion/permanency

Action Plan 4.4: Provide examples of successful promotion/permanency cases. Ensure cases of female researchers are added to this repository

Action Plan 4.5: KMi's Staffing Committee and the candidate's Line Manager will provide mentoring/training in preparing for promotion and permanency cases. Given the lack of female professors and senior research fellows in the department, additional support for female academics will be requested from other departments via the Gender Equality Steering Group

We also plan to support our staff in fixed-term contracts to put forward project proposals where they can be PIs. As part of the Vitae recommendations on professional development¹⁰ and the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers¹¹, funders and employers of research staff have reached several agreements to improve the employment and support for researchers. An important part are the specific grants focused on young-career researchers.

Action Plan 4.10: Bi-annual workshops on first-grant schemes to increase awareness among early-career researchers and create a platform to encourage and support them to apply as PI for their own projects

In addition to the above actions, line managers meet with fixed-term contract staff six months before the end of contract to discuss next steps, including advice on where to look for internal vacancies, where existing staff at risk of redundancy are given priority. There is also support for fixed-term contract researchers at the OU provided in the form of workshops and expert drop-in sessions to help enhancing employability and to provide advice around CVs and job applications.

¹⁰ <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/>

¹¹<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/vitae-concordat-vitae-2011.pdf/@download/file/Vitae-Concordat-Vitae-2011.pdf>

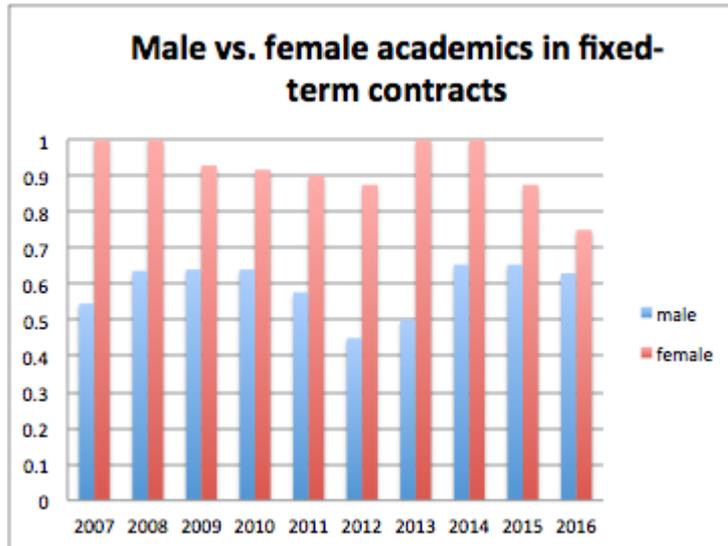


Fig 11: Male vs. female academics in fixed term contracts -11 years snapshot

Between 88% and 100% of female academics were in fixed term contracts from 2007 till 2015 (Figure 11). The situation has slightly improved in the last two years with 71% of female academics currently in fixed-term contracts. The inverse graph is shown in Figure 12 reflecting permanent positions.

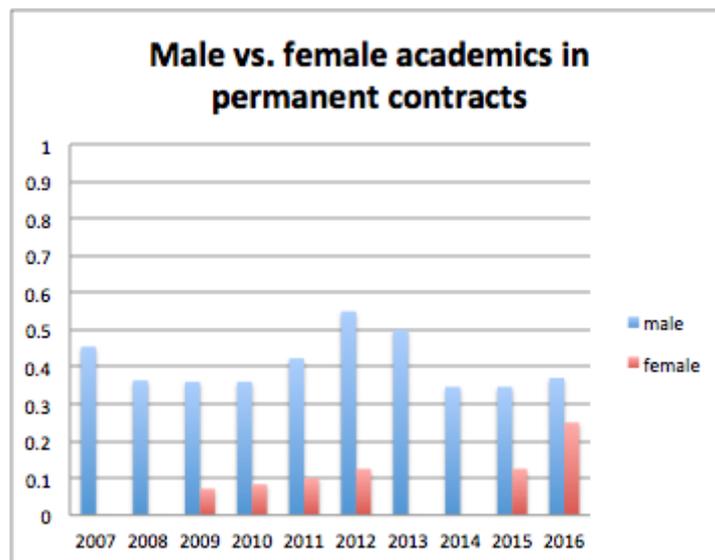


Fig 12: Male vs. female academics in permanent contracts -11 years snapshot

Year of permanency	Gender	Years to permanency	Increased Grade	Increased Scale
2011	M	5	1	6
2011	M	5	1	8
2015	F	9	1	9

2016	F	8	1	9
2016	M	7	2	14

Table 5: Permanent contracts -10 years progression

Five people have been promoted from fixed-term contracts to permanent contracts in the past 10 years (Table 5). All of them have been made permanent once they acquired the grade Research Fellow. Although no robust conclusions can be made with this small sample, these numbers seem to indicate that **males are promoted faster and acquired their permanency faster than females.**

In addition to the quantitative data analysis we have conducted a qualitative assessment of the permanency procedures via the questionnaires. As we can see in Figure 13, 39% of the lab members are **not aware of the permanency criteria and process** in KMi, and 33% are only partially aware. Staff members feel that the permanency criteria are not clear and transparent. This is worst in the case of females, with 50% females vs. 24% male considering the permanency criteria and process as “not at all clear and transparent”. To address these issues we have introduced the following actions to our plan, some of them previously listed above.

Action Plan 4.1 Provide a yearly tutorial to the lab summarising and explaining the promotion/permanency criteria. This is done in collaboration with OU HR. Share the prepared material for the tutorial with the department via our mailing list

Action Plan 4.2 KMi’s Staffing Committee will conduct an annual postdoctoral review (by reviewing the CVs of all KMi’s postdocs) to ensure that female academics are encouraged to apply for promotions/permanency once they meet the criteria and do not wait longer than necessary

Action Plan 4.3. In conjunction to the University’s Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) process, an annual career planning exercise will be conducted as a result of Action Plan 4.2. The aim is to provide strategic career advice and to ensure that career efforts are concentrated in the right path to obtain promotion/permanency

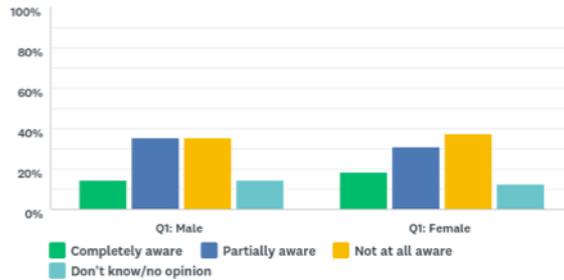
Action Plan 4.4: Provide examples of successful promotion/permanency cases. Ensure cases of female researchers are added to this repository

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Action Plan 4.6 Training for CDSA appraisers/Staffing Committee members on how bias may influence how candidates are perceived in promotion/ permanency/award cases

Action Plan 4.9 Add a female academic member to the Staffing Committee. At the moment there is a female representative for academic-related and support staff, but no female representative for academic staff

Q13 Are you aware of the permanency criteria and process in KMi?



Q14 Do you feel the permanency criteria and process in KMi are clear and transparent?

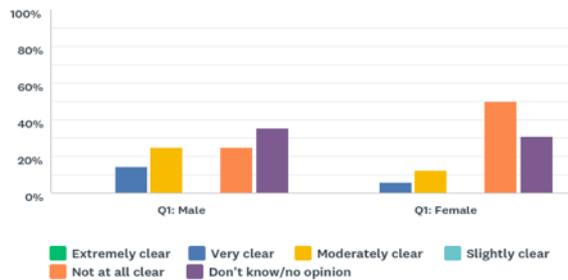


Figure 13: Results of questions related to KMi's permanency criteria and process

(iii) Academic leavers by grade and gender and full/part-time status

In the past 11 years, 62 members have left the department and only six of them while being in permanent positions. We performed two different analyses: (i) for those who left while being in fixed-term contracts, and (ii) for those who left while being in permanent positions (see Table 6).

	Fixed-term				Permanent			
	M	Avg. years	F	Avg. years	M	Avg. years	F	Avg. years
Professor	-	-	-	-	2	15	-	-
Senior Research Fellow	1	11	1	9	2	6	1	3
Research Fellow	4	6.5	2	10.3	1	37	-	-
Research Associate	23	3.6	13	5.6	-	-	-	-

Research Assistant	10	1.8	2	2.15	-	-	-	-
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Table 6: Academic leavers per grade in Fixed-term and Permanent contracts

We observe that females in fixed-term contracts stay for longer periods of time at the department than males. In the case of leavers in permanent contracts, we only have one case of a female academic who left after a significantly shorter period of time than her male counterparts.

To better understand the reasons why people leave the department we also explored the data emerging from our questionnaire to previous KMi members. We analysed thirty (30) out of the forty three (43) responses we received. Fourteen (14) of them were females and sixteen (16) males. We made this selection to include only KMi previous members of staff on fixed-term or permanent contracts, excluding visiting scholars, internal visits and postdoctoral students.

The majority of the responses were extremely positive in regard to the reputation of the department, the research environment and the expertise in the area. However, responding to the question on the factors that lead them to the decision to leave the department the articulation of the responses between males and females varied. Most females referred directly to fixed-term contracts attributing great importance to the sense of security in their job environment. Males' responses on the other hand focused on career development and rise of salaries. Responding to whether their values were met in KMi, interestingly, the career progression came up as an issue for both gender groups, but once again females mentioned it more frequently.

The **slow career progression** was also linked to **inadequate career planning and not clear criteria regarding permanency and promotions**. The responses from the people who left KMi are in accordance with the ones we received from the existing members of staff (see Figure 13).

As mentioned earlier, these issues are a concern in department. **Action 4.2** (annual postdoctoral review) was introduced three years ago, supporting two female members of staff becoming permanent. We are now proposing to complement this action with clear information on criteria and processes for permanency and promotions (**Action 4.1**), with strategic career planning (**Action 4.3**), with mentoring and support (**Actions 4.4 and 4.5**), with unconscious bias training for CDSA appraiser and Staffing Committee members (**Action 4.6**), and introducing more balance within KMi's Staffing Committee (**Action 4.9**), which is in charge of career promotions and permanency within the department.

Word count: 1942

5. SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING WOMEN'S CAREERS

5.1. Key career transition points: academic staff

(i) Recruitment

2015 / 2016 / 2017	Ads	Year	Applicants		Shortlisted		Appointed	
Gender			F	M	F	M	F	M
Professor			-	-	-	-	-	-
Senior Research Fellow/Reader	2	2017	3	16	1	2	0	1
Research Fellow			-	-	-	-	-	-
Research Associate	3	2015	6	20	1	8	1	1
Research Associate	2	2016	4	5	1	3	0	2
Research Associate	6	2017	24	24	3	5	1	2
Average			41%	59%	24%	76%	28%	72%
Research Assistant	1	2015	5	8	1	4	0	1
Research Assistant	1	2016	2	3	1	1	0	1
Research Assistant	1	2017	5	2	2	0	1	0
Average			48%	52%	44%	56%	33%	66%

Table 7: Academic leavers per grade in Fixed-term and Permanent contracts

Table 7 shows data on recruitment for the past three years. No hirings have been made for professors or research fellows. The table shows a healthy flow of female applicants for all junior academic positions (48% for research assistants and 41% for research associates). Regarding senior academic positions, a senior research fellow and a reader position were advertised in 2017. At this level the number of female applicants decreased to 16%. While one female was shortlisted (33%) no female candidate was appointed. While the numbers are small in terms of the advertised positions, we can observe a **tendency of male applicants to be more successful than female applicants being shortlisted and appointed**. Several actions have been added to mitigate possible biases in the hiring process.

Action Plan 3.2 Design and conduct a face-to-face workshop focused on unconscious bias and recruitment practices. Provide this workshop once a year to everyone in KMi who is likely to be in an interview panel. Complement this workshop with the current online course on recruitment, selection and interviewing provided at the OU

Action Plan 3.6 Review the scoring sheets of a wide sample of interviews to investigate the reasons for the lower success rates of female applicants. Use this review to inform further actions

(ii) Induction

Postgraduate research students undertake induction on a university, faculty and institute level. University level induction includes introductions to training, support, IT and library services. STEM Faculty induction includes introductions to research conducted in STEM, student milestones and reporting, and student and supervisor expectations.

KMi induction for PhD students includes an initial meeting with the Postgraduate Research Tutor and a supervision meeting. The supervision team is asked by the Postgraduate Research Tutor to agree on a Third Party Monitor for the student. Her/his role is to provide pastoral support outside the supervisory environment.

All new staff also go through a formal induction program, as set out by the University's HR department. This is organised by the Department Office Manager and comprises five sections: department arrangements, university policies and procedures, health and safety, information regarding their specific role and an online induction module. New employees and their line managers are required to sign the induction paperwork to confirm they have received the necessary guidance and information, and are asked to complete a short questionnaire. This ensures they have understood and engaged with the induction process.¹²

In addition to the university procedures, every new starter to KMi (including visitors) has an admin induction with a member of the administration team to go through the day to day running in the lab, health and safety and KMi intranet (showing our room booking system, leave and CDSA system). We plan to add an introduction to Athena SWAN as part of this process, as well as an introduction to the women at OU network,¹³ a voluntary network to support women.

New members have a welcome meeting at KMi with their corresponding team. Line managers send an email to the department's mailing list welcoming and introducing the person, after which members of the department will approach her/him and introduce themselves. We also dedicate the first part of our town meetings (taking place every three months) to introduce and welcome the new lab members.

New starters within the administration team have an additional tailored induction checklist depending on their roles. This covers the first couple of weeks of employment, all the relevant information they need to complete their job and also training they will receive.

Action Plan 1.7 Revise the current OU induction for members of staff and add KMi-specific and complementary information (especially information on our Athena SWAN activities), particularly regarding permanency, promotion and awards (see Action Plan 4.1). Include information about the women at OU network, a voluntary network to empower existing and potential women leaders and managers in the University

¹² <http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/human-resources/Staff-Toolkit/new-staff>

¹³ <http://www.open.ac.uk/about/women-at-ou/>

(iii) Promotion

Around September all members of the lab have their Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) with their line managers, where appraisers and appraisees have a conversation on career development. The line manager then assesses whether the appraisee fulfils the criteria to apply for promotion. If this is the case, the appraisee will write a case with mentorship from his/her line manager.

In conjunction to the CDSA process, the Staffing Committee performs a yearly postdoctoral review, in which the CVs of AC2s and AC3s are assessed to determine which individuals are ready for promotion/permanency. If the Staffing Committee determines that someone is ready for promotion, the person is invited to write a case with mentoring from his/her line manager.

Promotions from AC1 to AC2 (research assistant to research associate) are decided internally in the department by the Staffing Committee following OU criteria and HERA benchmarks. In the cases where AC1s obtain their PhD, promotion to AC2 is automatic.

Promotion cases for AC3, AC4 and PB (research fellow, senior research fellow and professor) are put forward to the faculty committee (ASPRAG). This committee then decides which cases to put forward to the university committee, which ultimately takes the decision.

In 2015, the OU adopted a new set of academic promotions criteria.¹⁴ These criteria encompass promotion to senior lecturer (AC4) and the professorial levels. The new criteria make more explicit the range of activities that are recognised and valued for promotion purposes. The new profiles are: Teaching, Knowledge Exchange, Research, Research and Teaching. All four profiles, and at all levels, include specific criteria related to academic leadership. Importantly, the new promotion criteria allow for reductions in expected achievements for staff who have taken periods of parental leave or part-time working, or where other special circumstances apply. This aspect is along similar lines to the criteria applied in the 2014 REF.

	2015				2016				2017			
	Appl		Succ		App		Succ		App		Succ	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
AC2-AC3									-	2	-	1
AC3-AC4	-	2	-	2					-	1	-	1
AC4-PB					-	1	-	1				

Table 8: Number of cases submitted for promotion and success rates 2015-17

¹⁴ <http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/governance/main/appointments-promotions-and-awards/promotions>

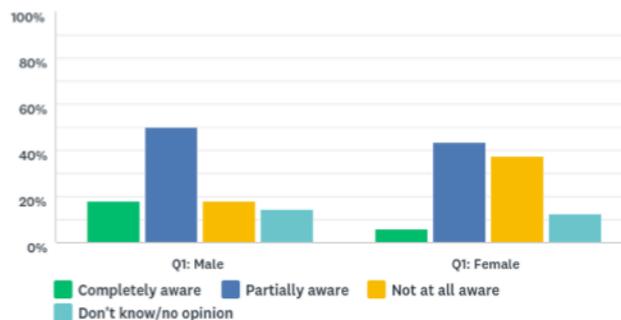
Table 8 shows the numbers of cases submitted for promotion in the last three years and the success rates. **There hasn't been any application for promotion for a female academic in the last three years.** The five cases submitted have all been by male candidates.

AC1-AC2 years		AC2-AC3 years		AC3-AC4 years		AC4-PB1	
F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
2	3	7	3		2		7
1	2	6	3		5		
	2	6	3		5		
	1		3				
	2		6				
	1		2				
	1						
1.5	1.625	6.33	3.3	-	4	-	-

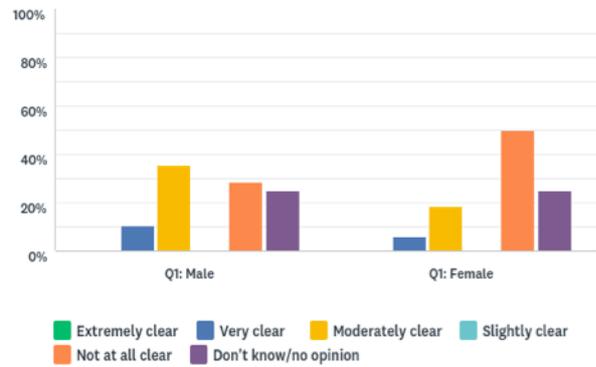
Table 9: Academic promotions, considering all KMi members hired after 2006. Promotions include the type (AC1-AC2 /AC2-AC3 /AC3-AC4 and AC4-PB1), if they were granted to male (M) or female (F) and the number of years it took to obtain it

To complement this study Table 9 shows all the promotions granted to KMi members who were hired after 2006. We have selected these cases because we have in our data their complete career evolution. 24 promotions were granted in the last 11 years, 5 to females (21%) and 19 to males (79%). Promotions from AC1 to AC2 take few months longer for males than for females (note this promotion is automatically granted to an individual once he or she acquires the PhD title). More indicative are the promotions from AC2 to AC3. **It takes years longer for females** to obtain this promotion. In the 11 years analysed no female was promoted from AC3 to AC4 neither from AC4 to a professorial band.

Q11 Are you aware of the promotion criteria and process in KMi?



Q12 Do you feel the promotion process and criteria in KMi are clear and transparent?



Q15 How supported do you feel in promotion and permanency procedures?

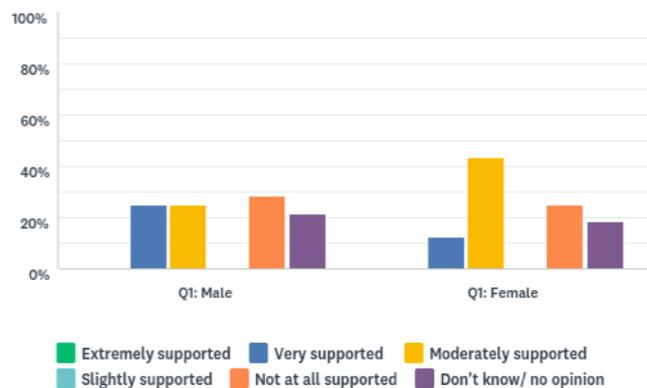


Figure 14: Results of questions regarding the promotions criteria, process and support

We complemented our previous investigation with questionnaires (see Figure 14) and observed that the **criteria and processes for promotion are not clear or transparent** for KMi staff members. 24% of lab members are not at all aware of the promotion criteria and 48% are only partially aware. In addition 35% of lab members consider the process not at all clear. This problem is observed with more intensity in our female researchers. Females however, feel slightly more supported than males to apply for promotion and permanency.

This investigation has revealed very insightful data about the situation in the lab, allowing targeted actions that can enhance gender equality. We believe that the combination of not being aware of the criteria and procedures, the lack of support, the lack of adequate career planning, and possible factors of unconscious bias are affecting and delaying the promotion of female members in the department.

The Athena SWAN team, with the full support of KMi Management Board, has proposed a set of measures to address these issues. As for permanency these measures include: **Action 4.1:** clear information on criteria and processes for permanency and promotions. **Action 4.2:** yearly postdoctoral review. **Action 4.3:**

strategic career planning. **Actions 4.4 and 4.5:** mentoring and support. **Actions 4.6:** unconscious bias training. **Action 4.8:** female leadership programs. **Action 4.9:** introducing a more balanced gender distribution within KMi's Staffing Committee.

Action Plan 4.1 Provide a yearly tutorial to the lab summarising and explaining the promotions / permanency criteria. This is done in collaboration with OU HR. Share the prepared material for the tutorial with the department via our mailing list

Action Plan 4.2 KMi's Staffing Committee will conduct an annual postdoctoral review (by reviewing the CVs of all KMi's postdocs) to ensure that female academics are encouraged to apply for promotions/permanency once they meet the criteria and do not wait longer than necessary

Action Plan 4.3. In conjunction to the University's Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) process, an annual career planning exercise will be conducted as a result of Action Plan 4.2. The aim is to provide strategic career advice and to ensure that career efforts are concentrated in the right path to obtain promotion/permanency

Action Plan 4.4: Provide examples of successful promotion/permanency cases. Ensure cases of female researchers are added to this repository

Action Plan 4.5: KMi's Staffing Committee and the candidate's Line Manager will provide mentoring/training in preparing for promotion and permanency cases. Given the lack of female professors and senior research fellows in the department, additional support for female academics will be requested from other departments via the Gender Equality Steering Group

Action Plan 4.6 Training for CDSA appraisers / Staffing Committee members on how bias may influence how candidates are perceived in promotion/ permanency / award cases

Action Plan 4.8 Signposting and supporting participation in mentoring and leadership programs, such as the Aurora Leadership Program

Action Plan 4.9 Add a female academic member to the Staffing Committee. At the moment there is a female representative for academic-related and support staff, but no female representative for academic staff

In addition to promotion cases, once a year, members of the department can apply for an award.¹⁵ The annual merit award process is designed to recognise and reward exceptional achievement, which is by definition over and above good performance. There are three types of merit award: (i) Special award; this is an one-off lump sum payment designed to reward excellence in a particular year, (ii) Additional increment; as all salary grades have incremental steps, additional increments may be awarded to accelerate progression towards the top of the pay scale in cases of sustained performance above the norm. (iii) Discretionary points are points above the top of the

¹⁵ <http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/stem-faculty/info-staffing-team/merit-awards-2017>

normal grade salary points. Staff performing exceptionally, who are already at the top of the scale, can obtain a discretionary point. The last two awards translate into a salary increase, while the first one is an one-off lump sum.

As a result of the CDSA process, line managers encourage staff members to put their cases for award and mentor them on writing these cases. Appraisees are also allowed to write a case for award without the support of their line managers in case of disagreement.

Since 2007, KMi’s Staffing Committee has reviewed 100 cases for award, 32 from females and 68 from males. Females had 7 cases rejected (22%) while males had 17 (25%). From the accepted cases, females obtain a salary increase 44% of the times while the other 56% they obtain a special award. Males on the other hand obtain a salary increase 80% of the times (Table 10). As we can see, there is a **tendency to award additional increments and discretionary points to males, while females are more likely to be awarded an one-off lump sum**. Our questionnaires (see Figure 15) also reveal that 20% of lab members are not at all aware of the awards process.

We hope that our Action Plan, and in particular: **Action 4.6:** unconscious bias training and **Action 4.9:** introducing a more balanced gender distribution within KMi’s Staffing Committee, can help to address this issue.

Additional Increment				Special Award				Discretionary Point			
F	%F	M	%M	F	%F	M	%M	F	%F	M	%M
6	24%	21	41%	14	56%	10	20%	5	20%	20	39%

Table 10: Cases for award compiled for the last 11 years

Q16 Are you aware of the awards process in KMi?

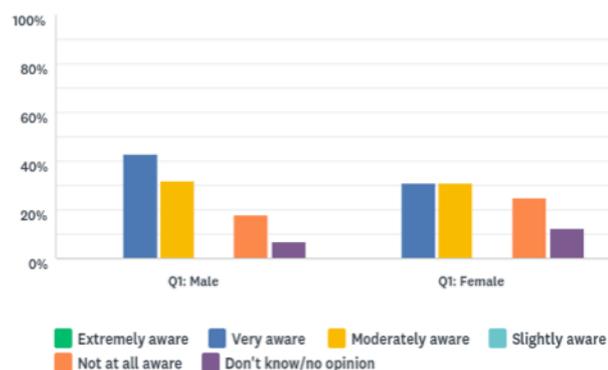


Figure 15: Results of the question regarding the awards criteria and process

Since CDSAs strongly influence the process of promotions and awards, as line managers are the first line of support in these processes, we want to make sure that both

appraisees and line managers are more aware of what to do and what to expect in the CDSA review process.

Action Plan 4.7 Inform CDSA appraisees and appraisers of all available OU guidelines, training programmes and tools for ensuring the effectiveness of the CDSA process. Make appraisees and appraisers more aware of what to do and what to expect in the yearly CDSA review process

(iv) **Department submissions to the Research Excellence Framework (REF)**

In 2008, 9 males were submitted to REF (Computer Science, Education). 10 males were eligible and no females were eligible. In 2014, 11 males and 2 females were submitted to REF, 11 males and 2 females were eligible. To be eligible a person must be 20% FET and be considered as an independent researcher. According to the current OU criteria, a person is considered an independent researcher if he or she is named PI on a research project. Traditionally, the financial department of the OU advised that for every submitted research proposal Principal Investigators (PIs) should be in permanent positions. This has led to a problem in which junior researchers do not appear as PIs in their own projects, since they are not permanent staff, and hence not eligible for the REF. In KMi, we had a case of a female researcher who was not eligible for the 2014 REF because of the above issue.

Since this event, KMi has been working on making the case for every researcher who is on a fixed-term contract so that they can be named as PI in the projects they write and lead. However, the problem also spans different research funders, who require the PIs to be permanent, or having fixed-term contracts longer than the duration of the awarded funding. Aiming to target these issues and to ensure eligibility of junior researchers for the REF we have added the following action to our Action Plan.

Action Plan 4.10: Bi-annual workshops on first-grant schemes to increase awareness among early-career researchers and create a platform to encourage and support them to apply as PI for their own projects

5.2. Career development: academic staff

(i) Training

The OU is committed to researcher career development, and was awarded the European Commission's 'HR Excellence in Research' badge in January 2013 and 2015. This acknowledges the OU's alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for their Recruitment, the UK QAA Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. The OU is also a member of Vitae.¹⁶ Its website gives access to a range of high quality resources to support development as a researcher including the Professional Development Planning for researchers online course (PDP ROC) and the Researcher Development Planning Tool.

¹⁶ <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/>

Every OU staff member has access to a personalised learning center (see Figure 16) with a wide range of resources to develop skills about management, leadership, diversity, etc. OU courses and modules are also offered for free to members of staff.¹⁷ Training is also provided face to face via workshops that are frequently organised on campus. This training includes PhD supervision, grant application, etc. Students and staff members are strongly encouraged to attend the training programs offered by the university.

Within the department, and as part of the CDSA process, staff are asked to identify their future needs for development. Any training is then discussed with the line manager. If the training requires monetary support a short case is written to the HoD. Cases are assessed with budgetary consideration. Full time PhD students receive an annual Research & Training Support Grant of £1,000 from the OU to enable them to participate in research-related activities, such as conferences. Students may request additional funding to the department. Academic staff research-related activities are generally covered by EU or national funding projects but additional support can also be requested from the department. Cases are assessed with budgetary consideration.

In general, staff feel supported to take part in career and/or personal development training (see Figure 17), with a slightly higher percentage of females than males feeling encouraged. We want to boost this encouragement by informing staff of all the possible training opportunities offered by the university and the department.

Action Plan 5.2 Provide an annual tutorial to the lab summarising and explaining the training opportunities offered by the OU and the department. Share the prepared material for the tutorial with the department via our mailing list

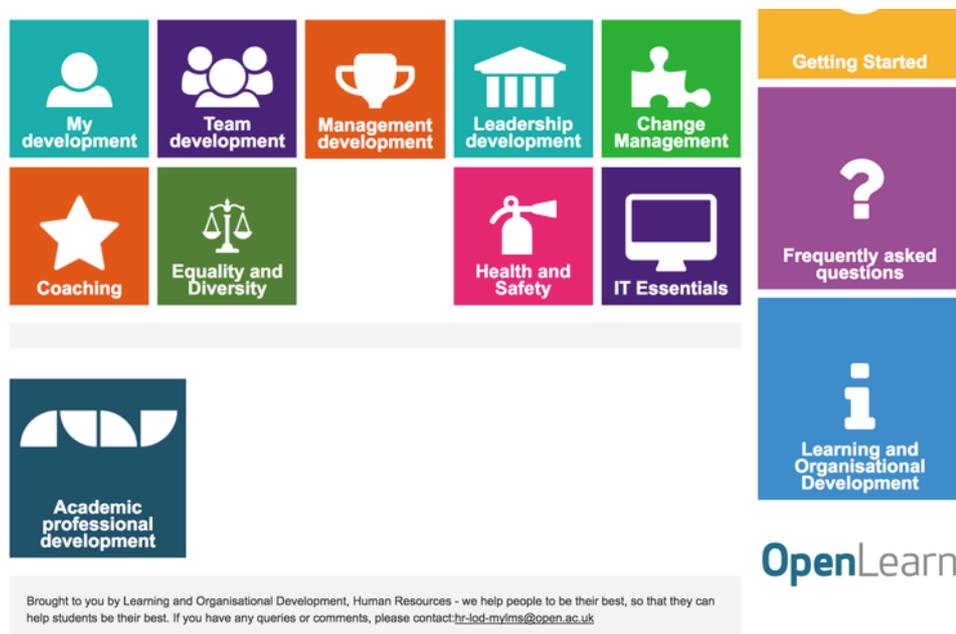


Figure 16: Screenshot of the OU's personalised learning centre

¹⁷ <http://apd.open.ac.uk/>

Q10 Do you feel encouraged to take part in career and/or personal development training?

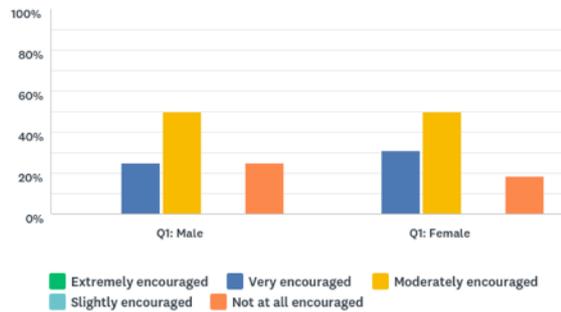


Figure 17: Results of the question regarding encouragement on personal development training

As part of the opportunities offered by the university, and actively encouraged by her line manager, the SAT chair has just started on the Aurora leadership programme.¹⁸ This is an extremely valuable program, considering the lack of female academics in senior positions in the department, and we will actively encourage all female members to apply.

Action Plan 4.8 Signposting and supporting participation in mentoring and leadership programs, such as the Aurora Leadership Program

(ii) Appraisal/development review

All members of staff take part in the University’s Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) scheme (there is 100% uptake). Each staff member is assigned a named appraiser for the CDSA, and meets with their appraiser (at least) annually in August/September to review past achievements and set objectives for the coming year. Each appraiser typically has up to 5 colleagues to appraise. The university offers training for both appraiser and appraisee through online videos and learning materials.¹⁹ The CDSA provides an opportunity for planning career goals (short-term and long-term) and identifying training and development needs. A report of the annual CDSA, with reflective comments by both appraiser and appraisee, is signed by both appraisee and appraiser.

Most members of the department feel that this process is very useful, good, or satisfactory. With 2 males and 1 female finding the process not at all useful. However, there is a higher tendency for males to find the process very useful or good, while females find it mostly satisfactory. We have introduced two actions in our plan to address this issue.

Action Plan 4.7 Inform CDSA appraisees and appraisers of all available OU guidelines, training programmes and tools for ensuring the effectiveness of the CDSA process. Make appraisees and appraisers more aware of what to do and what to expect in the

¹⁸ <https://www.lfhe.ac.uk/en/programmes-events/programmes/women-only/aurora/>

¹⁹ <https://learn3.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=30025>

yearly CDSA review process

Action Plan 4.6 Training for CDSA appraisers / Staffing Committee members on how bias may influence how candidates are perceived in promotion/ permanency / award cases

In addition to their CDSA feedback, staff will now receive feedback and career advice from the annual postdoctoral review (**Action 4.2 & Action 4.3**)

Action Plan 4.2 KMi's Staffing Committee will conduct an annual postdoctoral review (by reviewing the CVs of all KMi's postdocs) to ensure that female academics are encouraged to apply for promotions/permanency once they meet the criteria and do not wait longer than necessary

Action Plan 4.3. In conjunction to the University's Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) process, an annual career planning exercise will be conducted as a result of Action Plan 4.2. The aim is to provide strategic career advice and to ensure that career efforts are concentrated in the right path to obtain promotion/permanency

Q9 How was the advice you received in your last CDSA?

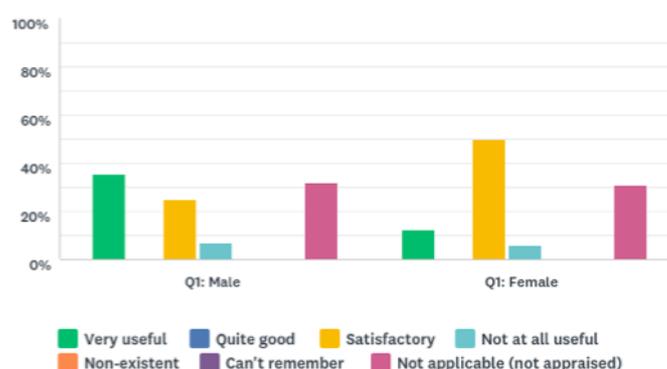


Figure 18: Results of questions regarding the appraisal development review

(iii) Support given to academic staff for career progression

Until now, academic staff have been supported in an informal manner, via discussions with line managers and senior lab members. Staff members discuss career progression with them as part of their CDSAs and it is also part of this process to provide career mentoring and planning. In addition, senior members of KMi are always open to advice about career development, supervision, proposal writing etc. However, our data has revealed that the CDSA process, as well as the current departmental practices to support the career progression of academic staff, are not sufficient and need an in-depth review and modification. Many of the actions in our plan aim to target this issue:

Action Plan 4.1 Provide a yearly tutorial to the lab summarising and explaining the

promotions / permanency criteria. This is done in collaboration with OU HR. Share the prepared material for the tutorial with the department via our mailing list

Action Plan 4.2 KMi's Staffing Committee will conduct an annual postdoctoral review (by reviewing the CVs of all KMi's postdocs) to ensure that female academics are encouraged to apply for promotions/permanency once they meet the criteria and do not wait longer than necessary

Action Plan 4.3. In conjunction to the University's Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) process, an annual career planning exercise will be conducted as a result of Action Plan 4.2. The aim is to provide strategic career advice and to ensure that career efforts are concentrated in the right path to obtain promotion/permanency

Action 4.4 Provide examples of successful promotion/permanency cases. Ensure cases of female researchers are added to this repository

Action 4.5 Provide mentoring/training in preparing for promotion and permanency cases

Action Plan 4.7 Inform CDSA appraisees and appraisers of all available OU guidelines, training programmes and tools for ensuring the effectiveness of the CDSA process. Make appraisees and appraisers more aware of what to do and what to expect in the yearly CDSA review process

Action Plan 4.8 Signposting and supporting participation in mentoring and leadership programs, such as the Aurora Leadership Program

Action 4.10 Bi-annual workshops on first-grant schemes to increase awareness among early-career researchers and create a platform to encourage and support them to apply as PI for their own projects

Action Plan 5.2 Provide an annual tutorial to the lab summarising and explaining the training opportunities offered by the OU and the department. Share the prepared material for the tutorial with the department via our mailing list

(iv) Support given to students (at any level) for academic career progression

The OU support for PhD students is run via our Graduate School. A programme of training and development events runs annually and connects the students from the department with the rest of the OU PhD student community. Career development is also one of many topics covered by the CRC Postgraduate Forum, a training and support forum attended by KMi and computing students. During their PhD study, students are assisted in the development of professional networks, through conferences and their supervisors' professional contacts. These help the student to build an awareness of career opportunities post-PhD.

PhD students have access to the Careers Service and to University-wide training events. They are encouraged to use the Graduate School Network (GSN), an online portal for

doctoral training and skills development. Through the GSN, students can also access the Researcher Development Framework, a professional development planning tool developed with Vitae, where they can assess and record their skills and competencies.

All PhD students are allocated a third party monitor to whom they can go for advice, in addition to their formal supervisors. Currently there is no consideration of gender in the allocation of Third Party Monitors. We intend to commit to ensuring all female students have the opportunity of a female 3rd party monitor if they have an all male supervision team. Given the size of KMi this will likely require us to look outside of KMi for third party monitors (e.g. approach academics in Computing and Communications).

Action Plan 2.6 Consideration of gender in the allocation of third party monitors.
Ensuring all female students have the opportunity of female 3rd party monitor if they have an all male supervision team

(v) [Support offered to those applying for research grant applications](#)

Support for writing research grant applications is given both within KMi and at University level. The Research Academic Strategy office (RAS)²⁰ provides pre-bidding support in the form of finance and budget estimates as well as advice on specific funding requirements. They compile and circulate regularly Information about upcoming funding opportunities. They also provide post-bidding support in the form of financial management, advice on open access and impact and knowledge exchange.

Within the department, research managers (which are part of KMi's admin team) offer comprehensive support. For example, for a co ordination bid the manager will: build and liaise with the consortium for the budget, format and collate all bid documentation, check the proposal through for inconsistencies, offer advice with regard to the funders rules and regulations and complete OU and funders participant portals. Research managers will often write or heavily contribute to the management section of the bid. They will also guide and mentor junior bidders through the process.

For unsuccessful bids, research managers will receive the bid evaluation report, and compile all the feedback as a way to assist with future bids and with the possible re-submission of the same bid.

In addition to the invaluable support of research managers, it is common practice in the department to ask other academics for advice and feedback during the proposal writing and reviewing process.

KMi is a very successful department attracting external funding from various EU and national funding programs. However, while early career researchers tend to participate in proposal writing, they generally do not lead research grant applications. It is part of our Action Plan to inform early career researchers about opportunities focused on their career stage and encourage and support them to be Principal Investigators.

²⁰ <http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/research-academic-strategy/main/research/research-and-enterprise>
<http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/research-academic-strategy/main/research/research-and-enterprise/pre-and-post-award-support>

Action Plan 4.10 Bi-annual workshops on first-grant schemes to increase awareness among early-career researchers and create a platform to encourage and support them to apply as PI for their own projects

5.3. Flexible working and managing career breaks

(i) Cover and support for maternity and adoption leave: before leave

Members of staff usually communicate their intention to take maternity, parental or adoption leave in two main ways. They first arrange a meeting with their line manager who then formally informs the HR manager in the department about the employee plans. The member of staff is then asked to send an email directly to the department's HR manager who then provides the staff member with all the necessary information to make a choice on the type of leave (maternity or parental leave for instance) that better suits the need of the staff member's family.

The staff member is also offered a meeting with a central OU HR administrator to be better informed about maternity rights, available solutions and necessary procedures. The staff member is also sent a comprehensive 'working parents pack'. The pack includes maternity, paternity and adoption leaves policies and procedures documents, as well as information and guidance on childcare voucher and child minding expenses scheme, statutory flexible working rights and flexible working policy.

Most information on maternity options are managed centrally by the University's HR department but for improving local awareness of the general process the department's HR administration offer a point of contact to understand the whole process, which can look a bit cumbersome at first.

Action Plan 6.1 A new section will be added to the department's Website to inform members of staff on "Cover and Support for Maternity and Adoption leave" to improve local awareness of procedures and policies

(ii) Cover and support for maternity and adoption leave: during leave

Most individuals take leave of 9 to 12 months. During this period the department takes charge of all the staff member's responsibilities such as research projects, line management, PhD supervision etc. When resources are available, this is done by appointing new people, but in many cases other members of staff in the department are asked to take on extra responsibilities. The staff member seeking leave usually suggest and arrange for the right people to be appointed to cover for their absence. There is not an established departmental protocol to follow and each case is handled independently.

People who took maternity leave report that the department in all cases ensured continuity of work. However some said that "they were not at ease with the idea to increase the workload of their colleagues, with work they would not be necessarily compensated for".

Action Plan 6.2 Agreeing on departmental good practices and policies to cover for parental and adoption leave

The people appointed to cover for maternity and adoption break remain informally in contact, and they are at their continuous disposal for information and catch up. However, Keep In Touch (KIT) days are not part of the department practice. In a review of parental leave experiences carried out in the context of the University's Athena SWAN Bronze Action Plan, 223 members of staff who took leave from 2010 to 2015, were consulted about KIT days. KIT had been used by 40% of respondents. Of those who had used KIT days 89.6% had found them helpful for updating knowledge, building confidence, reconnecting with work and preparing to leave their child in daycare. However, 33% of respondents were not aware that KIT days existed.

Action Plan 6.3 Promoting awareness of Keep In Touch (KIT) days to all staff, particularly line managers and, when requested, agreeing on keeping-in-touch days to catch up regularly on work progress during maternity

(iii) [Cover and support for maternity and adoption leave: returning to work](#)

On return from maternity or adoption leave the department is fully flexible on the ways in which the staff member intends to organise her/his return to work. The HoD is fully supportive of taking leave as better suits the specific individual and to ensure a staged return to work.

Returners report that they *"felt totally at ease in the way they could organise their return to work"*; for instance they were *"allowed a part time period to progressively manage the workload"*, and they *"were offered to take all accumulated and remaining leave in one go at the end of maternity, when they needed them the most"*.

However, there is not yet a buddy/mentor scheme to advise the staff member on how to adjust to change.

Action Plan 6.4 Establishing a buddy/mentor scheme at department level to advise and support returning staff members

Action Plan 6.5 Add information to the department website on policies and practices for supporting staff returning to work after maternity and adoption leave, including (agile working²¹, career breaks²² - which enables people caring for dependant children to ask for unpaid career leaves - and childcare policy²³)

²¹<http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/intranet6.open.ac.uk.human-resources/files/files/ecms/policies-and-procedures/f/flexible-working/Agile-Working-Policy-HRP092.pdf>

²²<http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/intranet6.open.ac.uk.human-resources/files/files/ecms/policies-and-procedures/c/career-breaks/Unpaid-Career-Break-Policy-%28for-staff-with-Caring-Responsibilities%29-HRP029.pdf>

²³<http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/intranet6.open.ac.uk.human-resources/files/files/ecms/policies-and-procedures/c/childcare/Childminding-Expenses-Scheme-HRG201.pdf>

The university has a childminding expenses scheme, under which the OU considers meeting limited childminding expenses for children where additional expenses are incurred for out of hours working where they are required to: i. undertake overtime; ii. undertake a university training course; iii. stay away from home overnight or at the weekends on university business (such as research conferences, or project meetings). These funds are conditional to funding availability and HoD approval.

We started investigating the possibility to obtain funding for childminding directly from the budget of externally funded projects. Where funders allow, we plan to start a good practice of budgeting for resources for childminding

Action Plan 1.4 Investigate possibilities to obtain additional budget for Athena SWAN activities via EU and national funding programs

The OU also offers an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This is a free and confidential service available to all staff and their immediate family members, offering expert information, advice, counselling and support on a wide range of issues including maternity, caring for dependant children and returning after career breaks.

(iv) **Maternity return rate**

Table 11 show the number of women taking maternity leave in the last 3 years. Return rate is 100%. These are all junior academics. Two out of three were on temporary contracts. Staff contracts have always been renewed while on maternity leave. The three females taking maternity leave highlighted the support of the department.

	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017	
	Num	Return	Num	Return	Num	Return
Academic staff	1	1	1	1	1	1
Support staff	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 11: members of staff taken and returning from maternity leave

(v) **Paternity, shared parental, adoption, and parental leave uptake**

Table 12 shows the number of men taking paternity leave in the last 3 years. Return rate is 100%. These are two junior academics on permanent contracts, one junior academic on fix-term contract; and two support staff (one junior on fixed-term contract and one senior on permanent contract). Contracts have always been renewed. As with maternity leave, people taking paternity leave have highlighted the support of the department.

	2014		2015		2016	
	Num	Return	Num	Return	Num	Return

Academic staff	2	2	2	2	1	1
Support staff	0	0	0	0	1	1

Table 12: members of staff taking paternity leave

Fathers and adopting parents are also entitled to paternity leave. The University has introduced a Shared Parental Leave policy in line with recent legislation, allowing staff with caring responsibilities for babies or newly adopted children to share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of Shared Parental Pay. No one has taken this option in KMi so far. Our plan is to promote this option.

Action Plan 6.6 Disseminating information on the advantages/procedures relating to parental leave options on the department website

(vi) Flexible working

KMi has a culture of flexible working (Figure 19). More than 60% of our staff, males and females, declare to be working flexibly without the need of formally requesting it. Additionally the OU has a formal policy on Agile working.

Regarding maternity, two out of three women in the last three years came back to work part time. Transition from part-time to full time is self-managed. The OU’s Agile working policy specifically recognises that part-time arrangements are not permanent, and that a return to full-time working is an option to be discussed either within the CDSA or directly with the HoD.

There are also specific policies in place to avoid disadvantaging those whose research outputs are reduced through career breaks or part-time working, in promotion cases and REF submissions. So far though we have no examples of women in our department who actually used this policy at the last REF.

Action Plan 6.7 Disseminating information on options of flexible working as well as policies to avoid disadvantaging those whose research outputs and career development are reduced through career breaks

Q32 Have you formally requested flexible working?

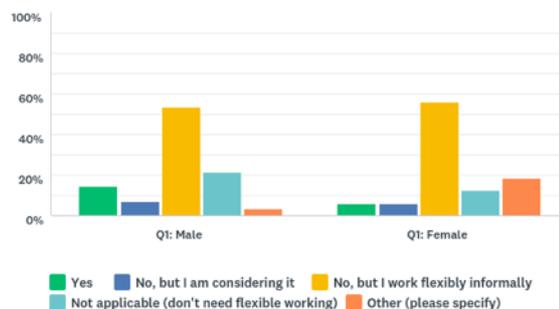


Figure 19: Flexible working in KMi.

5.4. Organisation and culture

(i) Culture

The surveys conducted affirmed that KMi is a friendly and welcoming workplace. A vivid example of such responses is the following statement: *“The KMi working culture, openness to new ideas, collaborative approach is unique and I failed to find it in other working places”*.



Figure 20: KMi music band. An example of KMi social activities

Figure 20 shows KMi’s music band, the Knowledge Media Instruments.²⁴ Participation is open to all lab members. Concerts take place at family-friendly places and times, to ensure everyone can attend.

Multiple social events are also organised along the year by the social committee, e.g., the Christmas party. KMi members and their families are invited to attend. The party has a theme (2016 Hawaii - see Figure 21), some music (provided by the band) and a secret Santa event, where small presents are raffled.

²⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/kmiinstruments/>

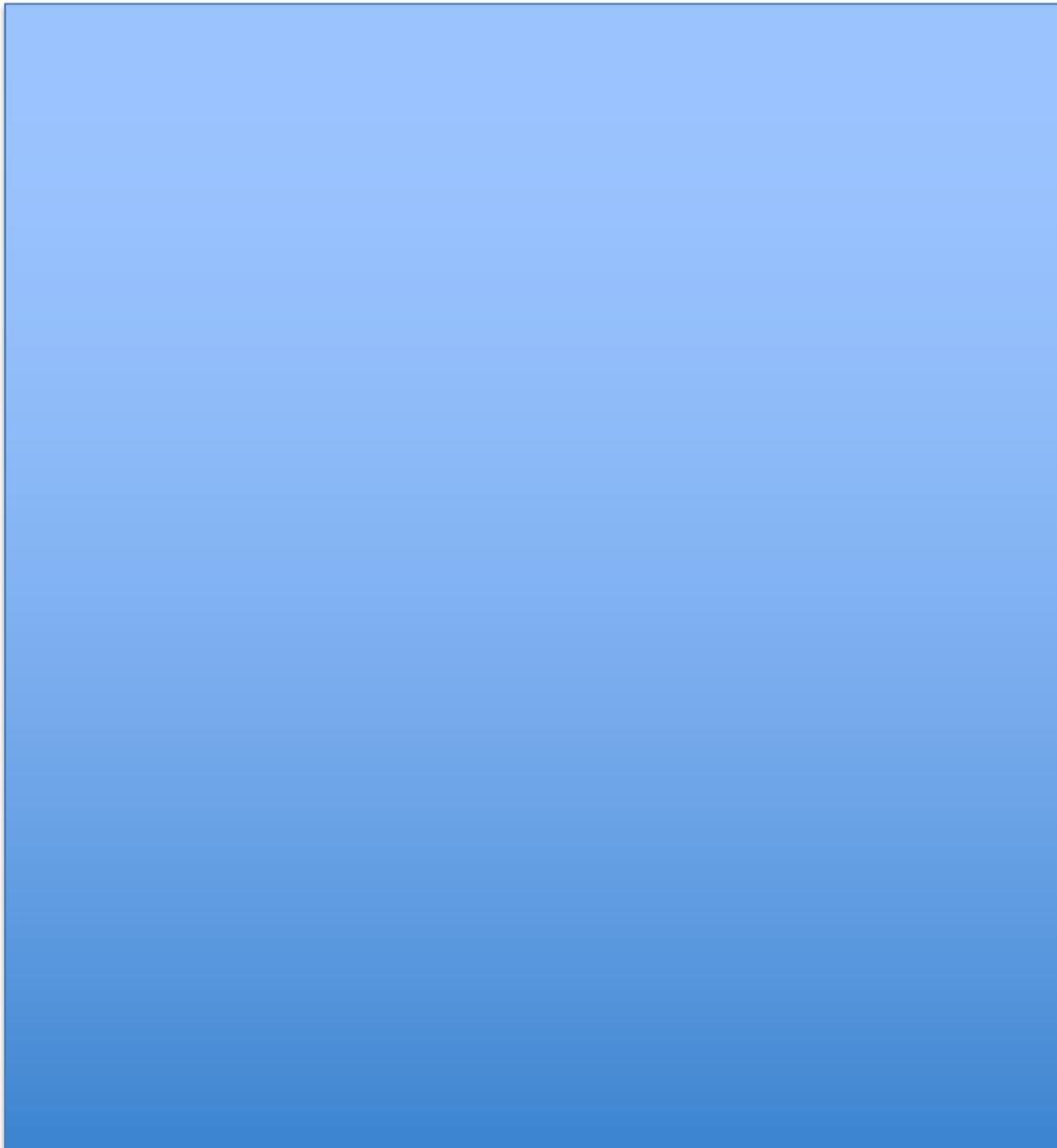


Figure 21: KMi Christmas party (Hawaiian theme)

Figure 22 shows our annual football and table tennis competitions. These activities always bring all members of the lab together (independently of the role, team, gender, etc.) It is a great way for people to socialise and bond.

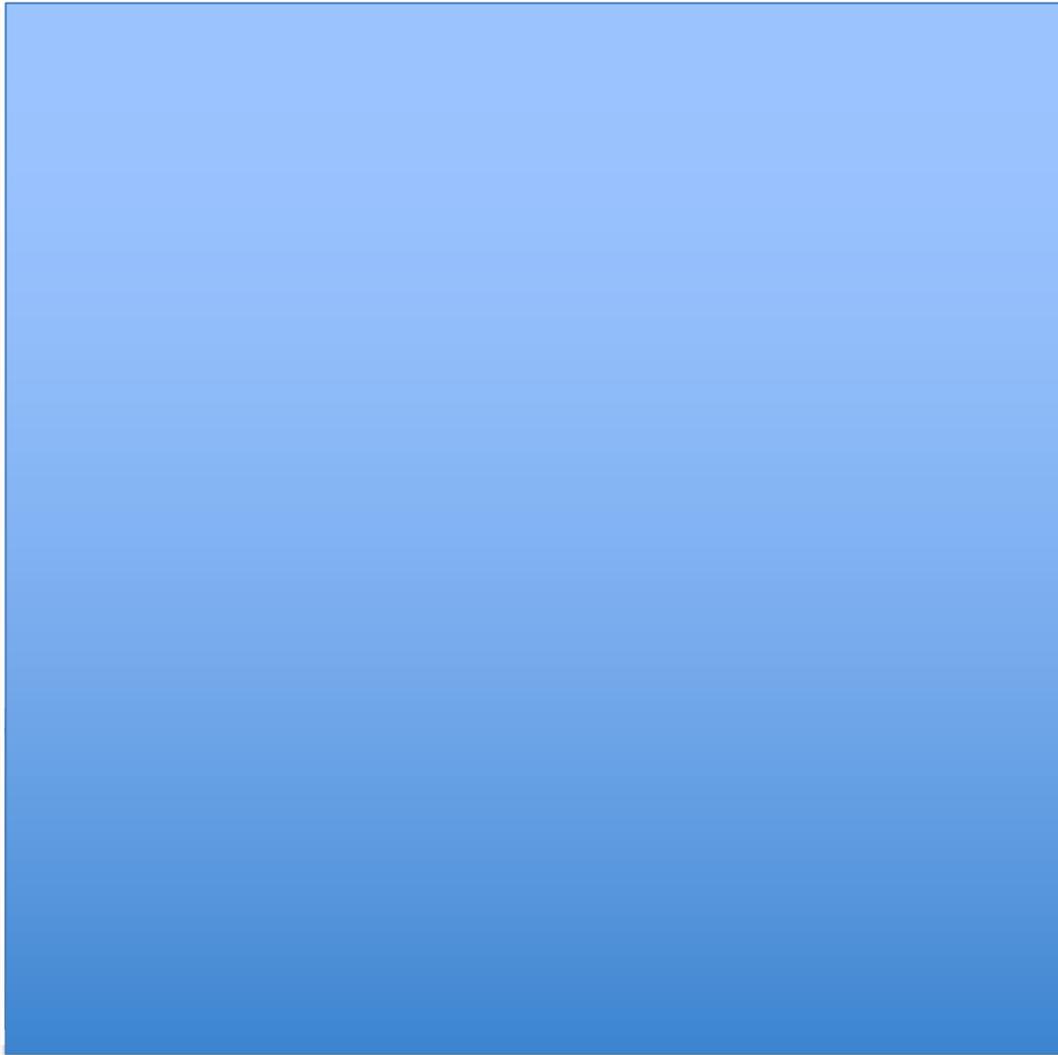
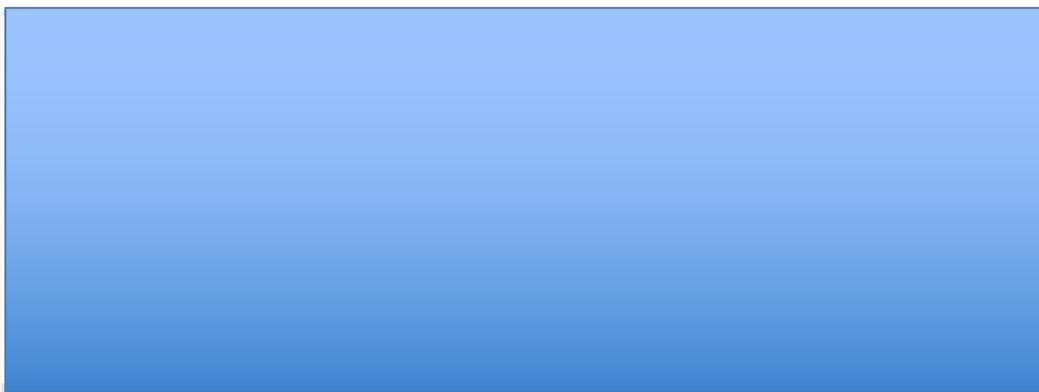


Figure 22: KMi Football and table tennis competition, semifinals

KMi is also very supportive on personal projects (see Figure 23). This year two of our researchers drove to Mongolia to raise money the Mary's Meals charity. KMi members supported this adventure in various ways, including sponsorship and the organisation of various events²⁵



²⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/mk2mg/>



Figure 23: KMi in support of personal projects

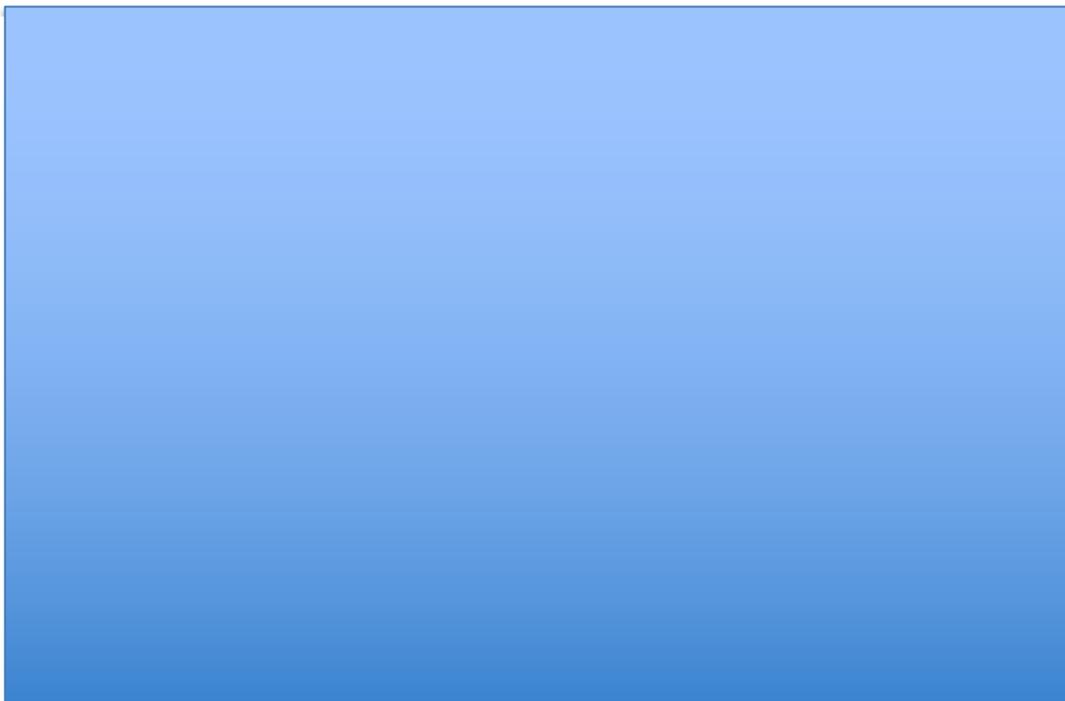


Figure 24: KMi 20-year anniversary

Figure 24 shows the 20th anniversary of KMi. Senior members had slide with everyone in the lab that read “It is knowledge media when... these people make it happen”.

The questionnaire for the existing members of staff asked about inclusiveness of the department (see Figure 25). Male members of staff feel that KMi is an inclusive place to work more strongly than females. In total 3 members of staff (2 females and 1 male) feel KMi is not an inclusive place to work. Our Action Plan includes a deeper investigation of the issues affecting inclusiveness.

Q21 Do you feel that KMi is an inclusive place to work?

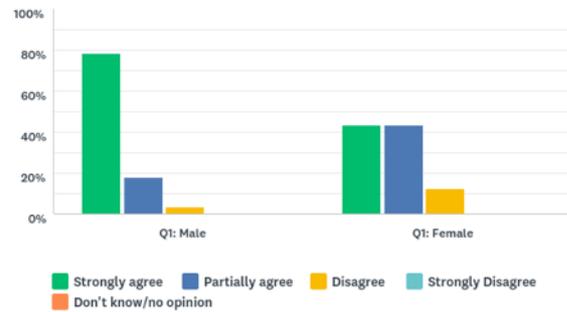


Figure 25: Results of question on inclusiveness

Action Plan 5.3: Design and roll out a questionnaire to identify the concrete factors affecting inclusiveness in the lab. Use the results of this study to inform further actions

To raise awareness and to start an open debate about equality and diversity we started organising talks and workshops (see Figure 25). Our first speaker was [redacted] who spoke about the “everyday sexism project”.²⁶ A workshop followed up this talk with a fantastic discussion about sexism from different backgrounds and perspectives. Our plan includes organising at least four events per year. We are extremely pleased to report that [redacted] will be our next speaker.²⁷ To keep the discussions alive we also plan to design posters that reflect on equality and diversity issues and display them in the kitchen, the social area of the department.

Action Plan 5.1 Organise at least four events a year (between talks and workshops) to raise awareness and engagement with the principles of equality and diversity

Action Plan 5.6 Design engaging posters to put in the kitchen (the social area within the lab) to raise awareness about equality and diversity

²⁶ <https://everydaysexism.com/>

²⁷ [redacted]



Figure 25: Workshop taking place at KMi to discuss issues of everyday sexism

(ii) HR policies

KMi has its own HR team, which is close contact with the University's HR. Two members of our SAT () are part of this team. They are the key contact points to report difficult issues affecting members of staff. Individuals contact them to ensure that guidance is provided and that HR policies are applied consistently. They remain closely involved in any developments. In almost all cases, problems are anticipated and dealt with without the need to invoke formal procedures. Our HR team also ensures that Management Board and Line Managers are aware of any updates to HR policies. This information is then cascaded to each team and lab member.

KMi is committed to strongly target possible issues of bullying, harassment and discrimination. While the OU has multiple procedures in place, we have introduced the following action to ensure that members of staff are aware of their options to act.

Action Plan 5.4: Summarise the HR processes regarding bullying, harassment and discrimination and provide an annual workshop to the lab. Also distribute the generated material via our internal mailing list

(iii) Representation of men and women on committees

There are five main committees within KMi:

Committee	Function	M	F
Management Board	Oversees management of the department	11	3
Executive Board	Unit planning and budgeting, infrastructure	3	1

Staffing Committee	Oversees the processes of hiring, promotions, permanency and annual awards	3	1
Athena SWAN Committee	Analyses gender equality issues within the department. In charge of preparing this proposal and executing the Action Plan	7	9
Social Committee	Organises KMi social events	2	0

Table 13: KMi Committees

The Management Board is led by the HoD. All permanent academic members of KMi are part of this committee. The committee also has three academic and support staff representatives (one of them female).

Members of the Executive Board and Staffing Committee are appointed by the KMi director and approved/discussed in Management Board. KMi Staffing Committee is currently comprised of the HoD, KMi assistant director research, a senior professor and the administration manager responsible for HR. The Committee meets quarterly to consider KMi's academic staffing matters including: i) identifying candidates who meet the criteria for promotion, supporting candidates to develop their case to the Faculty Academic Staff Promotions Committee (FASPC) and ii) making a case for academic permanency where it meets the university's criteria. In addition, once a year, the Staffing Committee reviews academic cases for annual merit awards. One of the latest decisions of the Management Board has been to add a female academic to the Staffing Committee as a result of the analysis done for Athena SWAN.

Action Plan 4.9 Add a female academic member to the Staffing Committee. At the moment there is a female representative for academic-related and support staff, but no female representative for academic staff

(iv) Participation on influential external committees

The department has a strong tradition of members playing leading roles within the university and other national committees. KMi is very supportive of such activity, which is recorded as part of the formal workload allocation and contributes to cases for promotion and special awards. The Athena SWAN members are involved in some of the key committees of the OU. The SAT chair is member of the OU's Gender Equality Steering Group. [redacted] is member of the OU's Research Degree Committee, responsible for strategy, policy and regulations related to research degrees. Our HoD is member of the Senate, the academic authority of the university, and [redacted] is member of the STEM Research and Enterprise Committee, which develops and helps to implement research and academic strategies for the faculty.

In addition to OU committees several of our staff members participate in organising committees of some of the top research conferences in their area, editorial boards, specialist groups, reviewing committees for EU funding programs and national research councils, and award panels. Until now we have not collected information on committee membership. Hence our plan includes initiating an annual audit that can inform further actions.

Action Plan 5.7 Initiate annual audit of internal and external committee membership and report on gender breakdown. Use the results of this audit to inform further actions

(v) **Workload model**

For TRAC reporting, KMi are required by the OU to use their Academic Workload Management (AWM) system. In Quarter 4 of the financial year, all permanent central academic and research staff work plans are uploaded to the AWM system. The plans are agreed at an annual meeting with the HoD where they also ratify their actual work carried out in the current year vs. their work plan. For fixed-term staff, plans are driven by their allocation to externally-funded grants or occasionally staff are allocated to internally-funded activities.

In addition to the formal task allocation and monitoring, we intend to explore how gender stereotypes influence the participation in activities that are external to the main duties. Studies indicate that women tend to contribute more significantly than men to “office housework”²⁸, things like taking notes, preparing coffee, and contributing to work that is less visible and that generally does not result in a “payoff” (higher earnings or improved profile). We have begun developing a questionnaire to investigate perceptions of these factors within KMi and to understand more about the additional workload that such activities may impose.

Action Plan 5.8 Design and conduct a questionnaire to investigate gender disparity in workload balance and types of tasks assigned to both genders. Use the results of this study to inform further actions

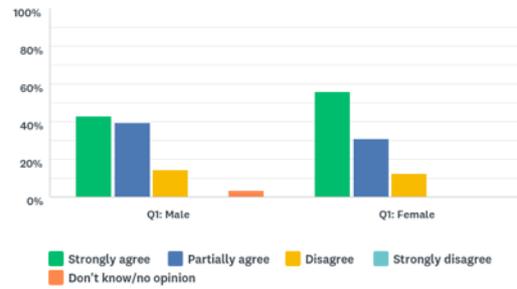
(vi) **Timing of departmental meetings and social gatherings**

While meetings do generally happen in core-hours (females agree with this statement more strongly than males -Figure 26), travelling is generally not completed within core-days due to attendance to conferences and project meetings. These meetings are frequently out of KMi’s control, since the ultimate decision is taken by the project coordinator, which can be a different institution than the OU. However, our Action Plan includes a reminder to all staff (particularly line managers) to respect and advocate for completing travelling in core days and meetings in core hours. When it comes to social gatherings time issues are always considered to ensure that all members of staff can attend with their families.

Action Plan 5.5: Remind all staff (particularly line managers) to respect and advocate for completing travelling in core days and meetings in core hours

²⁸ Kanter, R.M., (2008). *Men and women of the corporation: New edition*. Basic books.

Q22 Meetings in KMi are completed in core hours (10am - 3pm) to enable everyone to attend



Q23 In KMi work related travelling is completed within the working days (Monday to Friday)

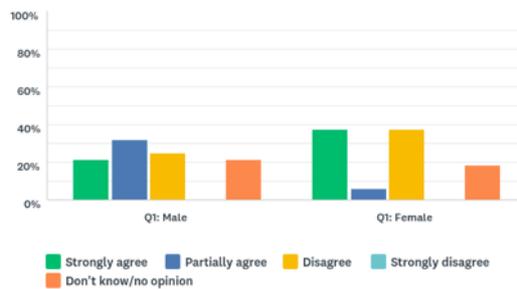


Figure 26: Questions on time of meetings and days of travelling

(vii) Visibility of role models

Data for all our seminars is recorded as part of the KMi website²⁹ and as part of our KMi Stadium Facebook page,³⁰ where we provide a life stream of talks. Internal seminars are mostly given by PhD students as part of their training, although any researcher is free to book an internal seminar to present her/his work to the lab. External seminars are organised when opportunities arise. Potential speakers are invited by members of the lab when travelling to London, or other areas of the UK close to the lab.

²⁹ <http://kmi.open.ac.uk/seminars/view/past/>

³⁰ https://www.facebook.com/pg/kmistadium/events/?ref=page_internal



Figure 27: KMi Seminar by PhD student

November 2014-2017	Male	Female
Internal Seminars	8	4
External Seminars	23	6

Table 14: Internal and external seminars, gender breakdown

Table 14 show the breakdown of KMi’s seminars in the past three years. For internal seminars 33% of speakers are female, which is higher than the percentage of female academics at the department (22.2%). For external seminars this is reduced to 20%. As part of our Athena activities we will encourage staff members to attract more female speakers. Female members are also encouraged to showcase KMi’s research in OU events (see Figure 28).



Figure 28: [redacted] explaining KMi's research to the OU's Vice-Chancellor

KMi's female researchers have high visibility and are frequently awarded in their respective research fields. These achievements are promoted in the KMi's news section of the website³¹ as well as through our Twitter and Facebook channels. We are nonetheless working on introducing several changes in the website to make this information more visible. Senior academics, particularly [redacted] [redacted] both members of the SAT, frequently act as mentors and role models for more junior female researchers.

Application Plan 3.5 Modify the KMi website to add visibility to KMi's female researchers and role models

³¹ <http://kmi.open.ac.uk/news/archive/>



Figure 29: [redacted] co-organising the International Semantic Web Conference

(viii) Outreach activities

Over the last year, KMiers have been involved in multiple outreach activities. Some of the highlights of the last period are reported below. The department is very supportive of such activities, which contribute to cases for promotion and special awards.

In July the OU welcomed students from five local schools to celebrate their participation in a poster competition about fighting hate crime in Milton Keynes (Figure 30). [redacted] was involved in the organisation. KMi illustrated its commitment to diversity and tolerance by sponsoring the 3rd place prize. The award was presented by [redacted]

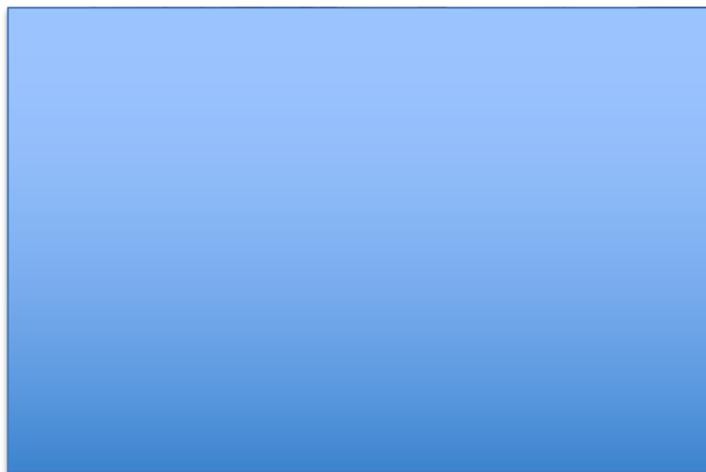


Figure 30: [redacted] engaging with local schools as part of the fight against hate campaign

KMi's PhD students and SAT member, [redacted], volunteers at Cotswold Raspberry Pi Jam, a family-friendly computing & electronics event that attracts more than 100 attendees (Figure 31). This year the numbers of girls in attendance was 40%.

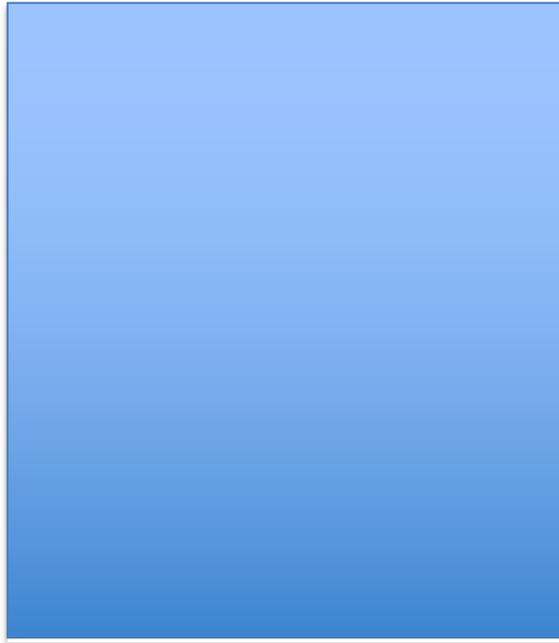


Figure 31: [redacted] showing [redacted] how the motor controller speaks to the Pi and then drives the wheels on her robot



Figure 32: Community Workshops in Toxteth, Liverpool about energy-saving technology

Last year [redacted] engaged in a series of 3 workshops in Liverpool to discuss values around energy saving and the possibilities of technology.

Word count: 5982

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Several colleagues in our department are involved in other equality related work. For example, this year KMi members organised the “POST-HALLOWEEN BRING SWEETNESS TO KMI DAY” in order to raise fundings for Q:Alliance,³² a local charity that provides support, information and representation for the LGBTQ+ people who live, work and play in Milton Keynes. KMi has supported Q:Alliance several times, raising money to help promote the weekly youth group and outreach initiatives to prevent transphobia in adult learning. The following e-mail from the charity was sent as reply from this initiative:

“Thank you to everyone who is contributing! Q:Alliance is a really good organisation supporting LGBT people, particularly teens, in MK and Bedford. We have a weekly youth group and host meetings for parents and relatives of LGBT kids. We also do special things like taking the kids to pride, or having parties for them. We've been having a tough year after losing some council funding, so thank you Chris and Matteo for thinking of us and thanks to all of you :)”

Word count: 272

³² <http://qalliance.org.uk/>

7. ACTION PLAN

The Open University. Knowledge Media Institute. Athena Bronze Award Submission. 2017 Action Plan (* indicates highest priority)						
Action Ref No	Planned Action objective	Rationale (i.e. what evidence is there that prompted this action/objective?)	Key outputs and milestones	Timeframe (start/end date)	Person Responsible (include job title)	Success criteria and outcome
Evidence gathering and reporting						
1.1*	Establish an annual monthly cycle of SAT meetings	All actions in this plan will need to be owned, planned and taken forward. Also discussions are needed to establish new analyses and initiatives as we learn over time	SAT meets every month to plan for data analyses and Athena SWAN initiatives and to reflect on our lessons learned	Ongoing		The Athena SWAN team will ensure that actions are being taken forward and that lessons learned from these actions are being documented in our shared Google Drive folder

1.2*	Establish an annual cycle of SAT and reporting schedule to departmental management team as part of our monthly Management Board meetings	All actions in this plan will need to be integrated into departmental strategy and planning	Reporting on Athena SWAN/ gender data and initiatives at departmental management team meeting every month	Ongoing		The Management Board of the department is informed and involved in the the Athena SWAN initiatives and considers issues of gender equality and diversity routinely as part of all decisions
1,3 *	Establish an annual cycle of SAT and reporting schedule to the entire department as part of our tri-monthly town meetings	All actions in this plan will need to be communicated and discussed with the department to keep everyone informed and included	Reporting on Athena SWAN/ gender data and initiatives, and gathering feedback from lab members as part of our town meetings once every three months	Ongoing		The complete department is informed and involved in all the Athena SWAN initiatives
1.4	Investigate possibilities to obtain additional budget for Athena SWAN activities via EU and national funding programs	KMi has committed 2,000 pounds budget for Athena SWAN activities. While this can cover for small activities, it will not be able to cover for greater costs, such as child care	Revise the different EU and national funding programs of current KMi projects and determine which Athena-related activities could be covered as cost to the project (e.g. child	Ongoing		Document a list of EU and national funding programs and the type of Athena SWAN activities that those programs could include as costs. Budget for resources

			care costs / training, etc.)			where founders allow
1.5	Investigate a way of incorporating part-time staff data as part of our data collection	Very few KMi members have worked part time and for smaller periods of time (months) which is not reflected on yearly reporting	Revise the current data collection and summarization processes to ensure that part-time work, even when requested for few months, is reflected in the data	Ongoing		Generate a spreadsheet to complement our current data collection pipeline with part-time staff data
1.6 *	Put in place a system for regularly collecting and reviewing gender data on the recruitment, progression and attainment of students	Data not currently routinely analysed at department or programme level	Regular data collection will underpin and enable monitoring of success of actions in Section 2 of this plan	December 2017/annual		The system will facility [redacted] (our Senior Coordinator of Staffing & Recruitment) to monitor and flag gender disparities happening during recruitment
1.7	Revise the current OU induction for members of staff and add KMi-specific and complementary information (especially information on our Athena SWAN	Data collected for this report showed a lack of information in regard to university criteria and procedures for promotions, permanency and awards. Specific KMi	Generate a list of missing elements on the current induction package, design the new content and include it in the induction package	December 2017 - March 2017 Identify the missing elements on the induction package. March 2017- June 2017. Generate additional content with to provide with the		Introduce the new KMi-specific designed content to the induction package, including specific KMi Athena SWAN activities

	activities), particularly regarding permanency, promotion and awards (see Action Plan 4.1). Include information about the women at OU network, a voluntary network to empower existing and potential women leaders and managers in the University	Athena SWAN activities are also not yet part of our induction package		induction package. June 2017. Ongoing - monitor if any other elements need to be added		
2. Undergraduate and postgraduate (PG) students						
2.1	Investigate reasons for low recruitment of part-time female postgraduate research students. Survey and interview current part-time students (all genders) to explore their experiences. Use the results of this study to inform further actions	Data show low recruitment of women part time PG research students. See also action 1.6	December 2017: work commences January 2018: design of surveys and interviews complete March 2018: data collection complete April 2018: data analysis complete May 2018: Report on findings and recommendations to management team.	December 2017 / May 2018		Barriers to part-time PhD study identified and potential solutions recommended.

2.2 *	Investigate reasons for students dropping their PhD studies and the different factors that affect male and female. Use the results of this study to inform further actions.	Data shows that 26% of male and 30% of females do not complete their PhDs	Try to find the contact information of ex-PhD students at KMi who didn't finish their studies and send them a request to fill an anonymous questionnaire. Design a questionnaire to analyse PhD non-completion factors.	Ongoing		Investigate the obstacles for PhD completion at KMi, and the possible differences between genders of PhD students.
2.3	Identify points of contact with different STEM departments at the OU to target female Master students when advertising KMi PhD positions. Liaise with 2.1, 2.4, and 2.5 to develop a strategic approach to recruitment	Data show low recruitment of women part-time PG research students. We also want to maintain the current 50% balance in full-time female PG students	Identify at least 4-5 points of contact and have the first meeting with them by March 2018. Develop a common strategy with these points of contact so that female Master students are informed of PhD opportunities at KMi May 2018 - ongoing	Dec 2017/ongoing		Female Master students within the OU will be more aware of the part-time and full-time PhD opportunities at KMi. KMi will see an increase in female applicants for the PhD program

2.4	Identify points of contact with women Associate Lecturers, within the STEM faculty, but also in other working groups and communities of practice, such as WomenAtOU on Yammer. Liaise with 2.1, 2.3 and 2.5 to develop a strategic approach to recruitment	Data show low recruitment of women part time PG research students. We also want to maintain the current 50% balance in full-time female PG students	At least 5 -10 potential points of contact should be identified. A recruitment campaign will be launched in different departments and on different social media accessed and used by ALs by. May 2018 - ongoing	Dec 2017/ongoing		KMi will see an increased interest in the part time and full-time PhD program, particularly from women ALs who wish to do a part-time or full time PhD
2.5	Improve the KMi website recruitment pages and postgraduate area. Provide information on all the opportunities available. Consider how we can signpost/advertise these opportunities more effectively	Data show low recruitment of women part time PG research students. Also want to maintain the increase in full-time female students experienced in the last two years	November 2017: Work has commenced March 2018: Review of existing website complete April 2018: Recommended changes reported to management team June 2018 - onwards Implementation of the recommendations	Ongoing		Improved gender mix and volume of applications

2.6	Consideration of gender in the allocation of third party monitors. Ensuring all female students have the opportunity of female 3rd party monitor if they have an all male supervision team	Gender is not considered when forming the PhD supervision teams	Ensure that female PhD students are given the opportunity to have a female as part of their supervision team	Ongoing		Female PhD students are given the opportunity to have a female as part of their supervision/third party monitoring team
3. Recruitment						
3.1 *	Identify websites, groups and institutions dedicated to women in STEM. Use the created list to promote KMi positions through those channels	Data show lower percentage of female applicants	List of websites groups and institutions generated. KMi positions advertised through those channels.	November 2017 to March 2018: generate list. March 2018 - ongoing: advertise new positions through those channels		Promote open position within these spaces Establish contacts with relevant organisations who can support us to encourage suitable women to apply.
3.2 *	Design and conduct a face-to-face workshop focused on unconscious bias and recruitment	Data show males are more likely to be shortlisted and obtain positions	Design and create a face-to-face workshop focused on unconscious bias and recruitment	December 2017 - April 2018: workshop design May - June 2018.		Increase KMi's staff awareness of gender-neutral recruitment practices

	practices. Provide this workshop once a year to everyone in KMi who is likely to be in an interview panel. Complement this workshop with the current online course on recruitment, selection and interviewing provided at the OU		practices. Provide this workshop once a year to everyone in KMi who is likely to be in an interview panel	Select various dates and subgroups for the workshop. Repeat this exercise yearly	
3.3	Ensure that job adverts include wording that particularly encourages women to apply	Data show a lower percentage of female applicants	Design appropriate wording for the job adverts by learning from the practices of other OU departments and other universities	Ongoing	Make sure every job advert is worded in a way that encourage women to apply
3.4	Modify the KMi website to reflect why working at KMi and the OU can be very attractive to women (commitment to Athena SWAN, training	Data show lower percentage of female applicants	November 2017: Work has commenced March 2018: Review of existing website complete April 2018: Recommended changes reported to	Ongoing	Make job applicants aware of the full set of advantages that working for KMi and the OU has, particularly those that may be more important to female applicants (flexible

	opportunities, flexible working, etc.)		management team June 2018 - onwards Implementation of the recommendations			working, training, leave scheme, coverage for child care costs, etc.) This will hopefully translate into an increase in the number of female applicants
3.5	Modify the KMi website to add visibility to KMi's female researchers and role models	Data show a lower percentage of female applicants	November 2017: Work has commenced March 2018: collect the corresponding material (images, quotes, talks, etc.) April 2018: Provide a recommended design to make female role models more visible June 2018 - onwards implementation of the recommendations	Ongoing		Make job applicants aware of the existing female role models in KMi and at the same time enhance the visibility of existing female staff members. This will hopefully translate into an increase in the number of female applicants
3.6 *	Review the scoring sheets of a wide sample of interviews to investigate the reasons for the lower	Data show males are more likely to be shortlisted and obtain positions	Collect a wide sample of scoring sheets of interviews Study if there are key differences in the	Ongoing		List of possible disparities between rejection of applicants of different genders

	success rates of female applicants. Use this review to inform further actions		rejection reasons provided for candidates of different genders			
4. Career development and promotions						
4.1 *	Provide a yearly tutorial to the lab summarising and explaining the promotions / permanency criteria. This is done in collaboration with OU HR. Share the prepared material for the tutorial with the department via our mailing list	Initial data from the Athena conducted questionnaires revealed that staff, and particularly females, are not completely aware about the new criteria and processes for promotions and permanency	Now - February 2018 Collect and summarise all the relevant information in collaboration with OU HR. April 2018. Prepare a tutorial for the whole department on promotions criteria and procedures May 2018 Select a date for providing the tutorial for the department. Share the prepared material via our mailing list. Repeat this annually	Ongoing		All genders at the department are more aware of criteria and procedures for promotions and permanency. Make a special emphasis on communicating these criteria to female members of the lab

4.2 *	KMi's Staffing Committee will conduct an annual postdoctoral review (by reviewing the CVs of all KMi's postdocs) to ensure that female academics are encouraged to apply for promotions/permanency once they meet the criteria and do not wait longer than necessary	Reduce the gap in the time to applying for promotions/permanency for female members. Our initial data analysis reveals that it takes 3 to 4 years longer for females to obtain promotions and permanency	Analyse the CVs for all academic members of the department once a year (September) in line with the award cases. CVs should be made available to the Staffing Committee in digital form (website) to ensure visibility of our academics	Annual / ongoing		Ensure that promotion and permanency cases are considered yearly and that female members are encouraged to apply
4.3 *	In conjunction to the University's Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) process, an annual career planning exercise will be conducted as a result of Action Plan 4.2. The aim is to provide strategic career advice and to ensure that career efforts are concentrated in the	Use the above exercise (see 4.1) to provide mentoring and career planning to each candidate. This mentoring is provided by the HoD and members of the Staffing Committee rather than line managers (as the CDSA)	Establish a meeting between the candidate, his/her line manager (CDSA appraiser) and a member of the Staffing Committee to provide adequate feedback and career planning	Annual / ongoing		Provide strategic feedback to each candidate on career planning. Special emphasis will be put on supporting female members and encouraging them to pursue promotions and permanency

	right path to obtain promotion/permanency					
4.4 *	Provide examples of successful promotion/permanency cases. Ensure cases of female researchers are added to this repository	Ensure that staff have good examples of successful promotion cases that can help them to build their own case	Collect examples of successful promotion cases from members at the department who volunteer to share their cases	Ongoing		Repository of promotion/permanency cases available to all staff members
4.5 *	KMI's Staffing Committee and the candidate's Line Manager will provide mentoring/training in preparing for promotion and permanency cases. Given the lack of female professors and senior research fellows in the department, additional support for female academics will be requested from other departments via the Gender Equality	Ensure that the promotion cases are written in an adequate manner to highlight the key elements of the candidate's CV	Ensure that feedback is provided by senior members of the department on preparing promotion/permanency cases	Ongoing		Cases for promotion / permanency receive feedback from senior members of the department

	Steering Group					
4.6 *	Training for CDSA appraisers / Staffing Committee members on how bias may influence how candidates are perceived in promotion/ permanency / award cases	Data shows males are more likely to obtain a salary increase where female are more likely to obtain a one-off payment	Design and create an interactive workshop focused on unconscious bias and promotion/awards. Provide this workshop once a year to CDSA appraisers and members of the Staffing Committee	December 2017 - June 2018: Workshop design June - July 2018. Select various dates and subgroups for the workshop. Repeat this exercise yearly		Increase KMi's staff awareness of gender-neutral promotion/ permanency/ awards practices
4.7 *	Inform CDSA appraisees and appraisers of all available OU guidelines, training programmes and tools for ensuring the effectiveness of the CDSA process. Make appraisees and appraisers more aware of what to do and what to expect in the yearly CDSA review process	All our staff complete the CDSA once a year. However, a high percentage of staff do not find this meeting useful	The OU has multiple guidelines, training programs and tools for ensuring the effectiveness of the CDSA process. Our goal in this task is to make everyone more aware of these resources. Note that this action is also complemented by 4.6 (to make appraisers more aware of possible unconscious bias)	Ongoing. Resources are being collected. A yearly e-mail will be sent to the internal list with these resources when announcing the CDSA		All genders at the department are more aware of the CDSA procedures and what to expect

			and 4.3 where additional feedback is provided to both appraisees and appraisers, and 4.8, mentoring			
4.8 *	Signposting and supporting participation in mentoring and leadership programs, such as the Aurora Leadership Program	The Open University is part of the Aurora Leadership program. Our goal with this actions is to encourage all female members to apply to this fantastic opportunity	Be informed of the deadlines for submission. Advertise the program among female staff members	Ongoing		Females receiving more support and encouragement to become future leaders
4.9 *	Add a female academic member to the Staffing Committee. At the moment there is a female representative for academic-related and support staff, but no female representative for academic staff	Our initial data analysis reveals that it takes years longer for females to obtain promotions and permanency Data shows males are more likely to obtain a salary increase where females are more likely to obtain a one-off payment	Selecting and adding a female academic member to the Staffing Committee	January 208		Selecting and adding a female academic to the Staffing Committee

4.10 *	Bi-annual workshops on first-grant schemes to increase awareness among early-career researchers and create a platform to encourage and support them to apply as PI for their own projects	Our data analysis has shown that not being PI of a project means the researcher is generally considered not independent, which seriously limits her opportunities for career development and promotion	Collect information on specific grants for early career researchers. Design a workshop to support them in their applications	Ongoing		Early career researchers are more aware of their options to apply for research grants and feel more supported
5. Organisation and culture						
5.1 *	Organise at least four events a year (between talks and workshops) to raise awareness and engagement with the principles of equality and diversity	The first step to drive a behavioural change is to raise awareness. Inspirational talks and open debates within the department can help to change and improve the culture	Selection of speakers and design of workshops	Ongoing. The first talk and the first workshop took place in November with [redacted] invited to give a talk about the Everyday Sexism project, ³³ and with a collocated workshop around the topic of everyday sexism We are really honored to have Dr. [redacted] as our next speaker		Four events will be organised every year between inspirational talks and workshops. Talks will be promoted to other STEM departments to share our Athena SWAN activities

³³ <https://everydaysexism.com/>

5.2	Provide an annual tutorial to the lab summarising and explaining the training opportunities offered by the OU and the department. Share the prepared material for the tutorial with the department via our mailing list	Our questionnaire reveals that some of our staff do not feel encouraged to take part in career or personal development training	Now - February 2018 Collect and summarise all the relevant information in collaboration with the OU Research Career Development Team. April 2018. Prepare a tutorial for the whole department on promotion criteria and procedures May 2018 Select a date for providing the tutorial to the department. Share the prepared material via our mailing list. Repeat this annually	Ongoing		All genders at the department are more aware of training opportunities and feel more supported to take part on these activities
5.3 *	Design and roll out a questionnaire to identify the concrete factors affecting inclusiveness in the lab. Use the results of this study to	Males perceived KMi as a more inclusive place to work than females according to our questionnaires	Design and conduct a questionnaire.	Ongoing		Identify the key factors affecting inclusiveness in the lab

	inform further actions				
5.4	Summarise the HR processes regarding bullying, harassment and discrimination and provide an annual workshop to the lab. Also distribute the generated material via our internal mailing list	Issues of harassment, bullying and discrimination are unacceptable for any type of organisation and staff should be aware of their options to act	Provide a tutorial about the HR procedures for cases of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Distribute this tutorial to the unit and also send the material via our mailing list	Ongoing	Make members of the lab aware of their options to act in cases of harassment, bullying and discrimination
5.5 *	Remind all staff (particularly line managers) to respect and advocate for completing travelling in core days and meetings in core hours	Our questionnaires indicate that meetings are not always in core hours and travelling is not always done in core days	Ensure, when meetings and travelling is in the department's control, that these are done in core days and hours	Ongoing	Improve our staff satisfaction regarding the days and times in which travelling and meetings take place. Provide a better work/life balance
5.6	Design engaging posters to put in the kitchen (the social area within the lab) to raise awareness about equality and diversity	The first step to drive a behavioural change is to raise awareness. We hope that these small reminders of role models, unconscious biases,	Design at least 5 different posters a year	Ongoing	At least 5 different posters will be designed a year to keep lab members informed and engaged with equality and

		opportunities to engage, etc. help increasing awareness in the department				diversity
5.7	Initiate annual audit of internal and external committee membership and report on gender breakdown. Use the results of this audit to inform further actions	So far the department is not keeping records on participation in external committees	Annual analysis on participation in internal and external committees	November 2017/ Annual		Analysis of participation in internal and external committees broken down by gender
5.8 *	Design and conduct a questionnaire to investigate gender disparity in workload balance and types of tasks assigned to both genders. Use the results of this study to inform further actions	So far the department is not monitoring gender disparity in task allocation	Questionnaire about workload balance and task allocation	Ongoing		Insights on possible issues emerging from workload imbalances among genders
6.- Flexibility and career breaks						
6.1	A new section will be added to the department's	Feedback from people who recently took maternity	This action will improve departmental	January 2018- February 2018		Information page published on the KMi Website

	Website to inform members of staff on "Cover and Support for Maternity and Adoption leave"	leaves show that information is often scattered between website and people, and there is no unique information point for the entire process	awareness of procedures and policies of covering and supporting for Maternity and Adoption leave. A key milestone will be the department website redesign in which information will be made available to the department			
6.2 *	Agreeing on departmental good practices and policies to cover for parental and adoption leave	There is not an established departmental protocol to follow to cover for maternity leaves and each case is tackled independently. Additionally some of the staff who took parental leave said that "they were not at ease with the idea of increasing the workload of their colleagues, with	The department will systematically address the issue of covering for maternity/paternity/adoption leave in the first instance by appointing a new staff member. Only where no other alternative are viable will the option or redistributing work to existing member of staff be taken into consideration	January 2017 (to be presented to the Management Board for approval)		The Management Board approves the good practice and policy to cover for parental and adoption leave

		work they would not be necessarily compensated for”				
6.3 *	Promoting awareness of Keep In Touch (KIT) days to all staff, particularly line managers and, when requested, agreeing on keeping-in-touch days to catch up regularly on work progress during maternity	KIT days are not part of the department practice. A review of parental leave experiences evidence that KIT have a very high potential positive effect on supporting staff during leave but many people are not even aware of what they are and therefore do not use them	This action will promote awareness of KIT by adding an information section to the department Website, and establishing clear procedures for agreeing on keeping-in-touch days before the start of the leave period	January 2018-March 2018		Information published on the department Website. The Management Board approves the procedures for agreeing on keeping-in-touch days
6.4 *	Establishing a buddy/mentor scheme at department level to advise and support returning staff members	There are no good practices in place to advise staff members returning to work after maternity on how to adjust to change	This action will advise and support returning staff members on best practices, barriers and tips to manage stress workload, and balance between	Ongoing. The department has already appointed a young academic mother [redacted] in charge of matching new staff member with their		All the people who recently returned from maternity leave have a mentor assigned to them and meet their mentor at least every two month in

			work and family commitments	buddy/mentor		the first year after returning to work
6.5	Add information to the department website on policies and practices for supporting staff returning to work after maternity and adoption leave, including (agile working ³⁴ , career breaks ³⁵ - which enables people caring for dependant children to ask for unpaid career leaves - and childcare policy ³⁶)	Feedback from people recently returning from maternity leaves show that there is a lack of awareness of existing policies and practices and a lack of point of reference to gather information	Redesigning the department website to include informations on the buddy/mentor scheme for returning staff, the childminding expenses scheme and new departmental good practices to include childminding in project budgeting	March 2018 - April 2018		Information published on the department website
6.6	Disseminating information on the advantages/procedures relating to	Parental leave policy has been in place for a while but it was never used within	This action will support the understanding and promotion of the	March 2018 - April 2018		Information published on the department website

³⁴<http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/intranet6.open.ac.uk.human-resources/files/files/ecms/policies-and-procedures/f/flexible-working/Agile-Working-Policy-HRP092.pdf>

³⁵<http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/intranet6.open.ac.uk.human-resources/files/files/ecms/policies-and-procedures/c/career-breaks/Unpaid-Career-Break-Policy-%28for-staff-with-Caring-Responsibilities%29-HRP029.pdf>

³⁶<http://intranet6.open.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/intranet6.open.ac.uk.human-resources/files/files/ecms/policies-and-procedures/c/childcare/Childminding-Expenses-Scheme-HRG201.pdf>

	parental leave options on the department website	the department	new parental leaves option		
6.7	Disseminating information on options of flexible working as well as policies to avoid disadvantaging those whose research outputs and career development are reduced through career breaks.	Of the two women who recently returned to work part-time after maternity no one used the flexible working policy. One person claimed this is due to the lab's attitude to face-to-face work, but in some cases it is due to misinformation (one of the two women was not aware about the policy).	This action will promote awareness of the staff right to flexible working and the benefits that this can have especially for people returning to work after maternity break. It will also promote the dissemination of information to mitigate the negative effect of the break on career development.	March 2018 - April 2018	Information published on the department website.



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