SAGE

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA
GENDER EQUITY

Athena Swan Bronze Award for Higher Education Institutions

for the SAGE Athena Swan
Accreditation Pathway

Application Form & Guidelines

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is for Higher Education Institutions following the SAGE Athena Swan Pathway in Australia.

It includes:

> Part I - background information for Higher Education Institutions completing the SAGE Athena Swan Bronze Award application

> Part II – detailed application guidelines for the SAGE Athena Swan Bronze Award for Higher Education Institutions

> Part III – application form for the SAGE Athena Swan Bronze Award for Higher Education Institutions

Applicants should refer to the guidance (Part II) during completion of the Athena Swan application form (Part III). Applications that are incomplete may not be accepted.

This document is complemented by SAGE's Capacity Building Program for applicants, comprising workshops, webinars, additional resources, tailored advice, etc. Applicants are encouraged to contact SAGE for advice and guidance during the application preparation process.

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PART I – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PREREQUISITES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS APPLYING FOR AN ATHENA SWAN BRONZE AWARD

A Higher Education Institution applying for an Athena Swan Bronze Award in Australia must:

- be approved by and/or registered with the responsible Australian Federal and/or State/Territory Government Authority as a tertiary education (and research, as applicable) organisation

and

- be a SAGE subscriber and abide by the SAGE terms and conditions
- have no outstanding membership fees

In joining SAGE, the Head of the Institution (Vice Chancellor, or equivalent) has:

- accepted the SAGE terms and conditions
- confirmed the Institution's acceptance of the SAGE Athena Swan principles
- committed the leadership and management teams to accountability for actively and visibly championing and promoting gender equity, diversity and inclusion in the Institution, the Athena Swan community, and across the sector; driving institutional change; and resourcing action at all levels within the Institution.

SENIOR LEADERS' COMMITMENT TO THE SAGE ATHENA SWAN PRINCIPLES

In committing to the principles of the Athena Swan Charter, we recognise that we join a global community with a shared goal of advancing gender equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education and research.

Each Institution is at a different stage in its gender equity, diversity and inclusion journey, and has different challenges and priority areas for action.

In determining our institutional priorities, and designing and implementing interventions, we commit to:

1. ensuring that gender equity, diversity and inclusion work is appropriately resourced, distributed, recognised, and rewarded.

2. undertaking transparent and rigorous self-assessment processes, analysing institutional structures, systems, and cultures to identify the barriers to attraction, retention and progression for staff and students, and thus to gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

3. designing initiatives based on institutional data, and national and global evidence of best practice.

4. monitoring, evaluating, and publicly reporting on progress made, challenges experienced, and impact achieved, to inform continuous improvement.

5. actively incorporating Indigenous knowledges and perspectives to address the specific inequities and injustices experienced by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and students.

6. consciously considering all genders, recognising that gender is not binary, and that trans and gender diverse people face specific inequities because of their gender identities.

7. taking an intersectional approach to advancing gender equity, diversity and inclusion, recognising that people of any particular identity are not a homogeneous group.

8. engaging with those most impacted by inequitable practice to proactively redesign and reshape structures, systems and culture.

9. increasing the safety and wellbeing of staff and students by proactively and transparently preventing and responding to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, gender-based violence and discrimination.

10. embedding change in institutional governance and accountability structures; actively and visibly championing and promoting gender equity, diversity and inclusion in our Institutions, the Athena Swan community, and across the sector; and holding ourselves and other senior leaders accountable for driving sustainable transformational change.

OVERVIEW OF THE SAGE ATHENA SWAN BRONZE – CYGNET – SILVER PATHWAY

Athena Swan Bronze Award

The Bronze Award self-assessment and application process guides Institutions starting their SAGE Athena Swan journey to:

- understand the **current state of gender equity, diversity and inclusion (GEDI)** in the organisation
- understand the **structural, systemic and cultural Barriers that impede attraction, retention and progression**, and which thus contribute to inequity and a lack of diversity and inclusion
- create, and implement, an Action Plan to **remove or reduce five Key Barriers**

The Bronze Award Application Form assists Institutions to explore a range of factors known to be potential Barriers to attraction, retention or progression, and thus to GEDI in the organisation.

Institutions applying for a Bronze Award explore each of these factors to demonstrate their understanding of the current state of GEDI, and the key structural, systemic and cultural Barriers that impede attraction, retention and progression in the organisation.

Based on their identification of the **five** Key Barriers to attraction, retention or progression, they devise an Action Plan to remove or reduce each of these Barriers.

The Athena Swan Bronze Award is valid for a five-year period.

SAGE Cygnet Awards

The SAGE Cygnet process guides Institutions to:

- **implement actions** to remove or reduce the five Key Barriers to attraction, retention or progression in the Institution as identified during the Bronze Award self-assessment process
- **report on their progress** in implementing those actions
- **report on the outcomes and impact** of those actions
- reflect on **learnings** from any areas in which the desired progress, outcomes and impact has not been achieved
- create **further actions** to achieve or sustain the desired progress, outcomes and impact

Over the course of their Bronze Award validity period, Institutions submit five Progress and Impact Reports. Each Report corresponds to one of the Key Barriers to attraction, retention or progression (and thus GEDI).

Progress and Impact Reports can be submitted at any time during the five-year Bronze Award validity period.

Athena Swan Silver Award

The Silver Award self-assessment and application process guides Institutions on the SAGE Athena Swan journey to:

- understand the **current state of GEDI** in the organisation following the actions undertaken post-Bronze and reported through the Progress and Impact Reports for the SAGE Cygnet Awards
- understand the key structural, systemic and cultural **barriers that continue to impede attraction, retention and progression**, and which thus contribute to persistent inequity and a continued lack of diversity and inclusion
- create, and implement, an Action Plan to **remove or reduce five (new or continuing) Key Barriers**

The Silver Award application process recognises organisational maturity in GEDI. It supports Institutions to use their own data on the current state of GEDI to guide an in-depth analysis into the relevant persistent or emergent Barriers to attraction, retention or progression.

Institutions applying for a Silver Award do not need to explore every potential Barrier to attraction, retention or progression – only those where the data indicate inequity. For example:

- If parental leave uptake, return rates, and retention post-return appear equitable *and* the Institution's Culture Survey does not suggest that support around parental leave is a barrier, this potential Barrier does not need to be explored in the Silver application.
- If the barrier to progression posed by promotion was addressed in a Progress and Impact Report for a SAGE Cygnet Award *and* current data show equitable promotion rates, this area does not need to be explored in the Silver application.

Through this process, Institutions again identify the **five** Key Barriers to attraction, retention or progression. They then devise an Action Plan to remove or reduce each Barrier and **embed sustainable change**.

The Athena Swan Silver Award is valid for a five-year period.

ATHENA SWAN BRONZE AWARD REQUIREMENTS

To achieve an Athena Swan Bronze Award, a Higher Education Institution must demonstrate that it has established a solid foundation for improving gender equity, diversity and inclusion across its structures, systems and culture.

Achieving a Bronze Award requires the Higher Education Institution to demonstrate that it:

- understands the **current state** of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI) across the Institution
- understands the **structural, systemic and cultural Barriers** that impede attraction, retention and progression, and which thus contribute to inequity and a lack of diversity and inclusion
- has a **five-year action plan**, supported by an accountable structure, to remove or reduce five Key Barriers and thus advance GEDI across the Institution

Identifying the five Key Barriers to attraction, retention and progression

For more information on identifying Key Barriers, see SAGE Cygnet Awards: Identifying Key Barriers and Selecting KPAs

The Bronze Award application form is structured such that each sub-section of Section 4 corresponds to one potential barrier to attraction, retention or progression (and thus GEDI).

Through the self-assessment process, Institutions are asked to identify the five Key Barriers to attraction, retention or progression in the Institution. These five Key Barriers should be those which are having the greatest negative effect on the attraction, retention or progression of underrepresented groups of staff (and/or students, if applicable) in the organisation. Removal, or reduction, of these Key Barriers should be the Key Priority Areas for action, over actions aimed at addressing the remaining barriers, since their removal should have the greatest positive effect on attraction, retention or progression of underrepresented groups of staff (and/or students, if applicable), and thus on advancing GEDI in the Institution.

To support Institutions to utilise both a top-down and a bottom-up approach to advancing GEDI, the selected Key Barriers should include at least one **institution-wide barrier to GEDI** and at least one **sub-group specific barrier to GEDI**.

Institution-wide barriers

Barriers of this type affect attraction, retention, or progression **across the whole Institution**. Action to remove/reduce an Institution-wide barrier aims to drive holistic structural, systemic, and/or cultural change across the whole Institution. It can thus be thought of as '**horizontal**' action.

Examples of Institution-wide barriers include, but are not limited to:
- Recruitment
- Promotion and pathways for career development
- Preventing and responding to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination
- Flexibility in work practices
- Support relating to parental leave

Sub-group specific barriers

Barriers of this type specifically affect the attraction, retention, or progression of a **specific group of staff and/or students** in the Institution.

In many cases, this will relate to a particular organisational sub-unit, such as a Faculty or School. However, a sub-group may also reflect a particular underrepresented minority in the organisation.

In all cases, further targeted action (beyond what is being implemented Institution-wide), is needed to improve attraction, retention or progression. It can thus be thought of as '**vertical**' action.

Examples of specific sub-groups include, but are not limited to:
- Particular Schools, Faculties, or Disciplines[1]
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff (and/or students)
- Staff (and/or students) with disability
- Trans and/or Gender Diverse staff (and/or students)
- Staff (and/or students) on a specific campus
- Particular staff classifications, for example professional staff, casual staff

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[1] See Organisational sub-units

EXAMPLE | Kurrajong University identifies its Key Barriers

Through its collection of workforce demographic data, Kurrajong University learns that it has difficulty **retaining** women academic staff between Level B and C. Despite having gender balance in PhD students and at Levels A and B, the proportion of women drops to 38% at Level C and to only around 30% at Levels D and E.

Gender representation by level (%)
All Academic Staff - 2019
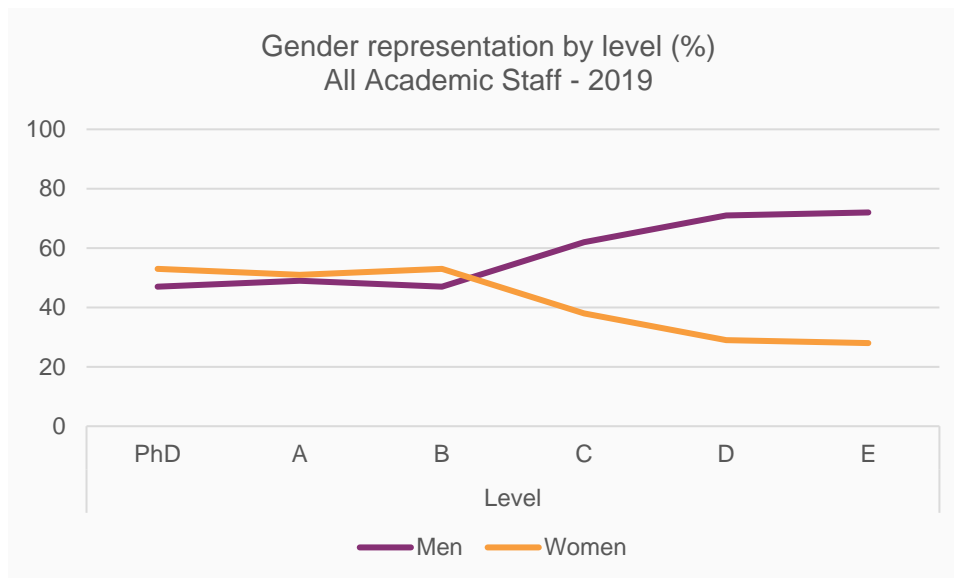
Through the self-assessment process, Kurrajong explores **why** women leave at these levels and identifies the following **institution-wide** Key Barriers to retaining them:

1) The **promotions process** appears to be inequitable. Feeling unable to progress their careers at Kurrajong, women academics leave to advance their careers elsewhere.
2) The support around **parental leave** is reported to be inadequate. This affects all parents but disproportionately affects women, single parents, and those in LGBTIQA+ family units.
3) **Flexible work policies and practices** are unclear and seem to be inconsistently applied. Again, this appears to disproportionately affect those with caring responsibilities – often women – as well as staff with disability.
4) **Bullying and harassment** is more frequently reported at Levels A and B. While Kurrajong's self-assessment has not revealed particular groups of women who are more likely to be subjected to bullying and harassment, the literature suggests that trans women, lesbians and women with disability have a higher likelihood of such experiences.

Kurrajong also uncovers a **sub-group specific** barrier in its Faculty of Science and Technology, where **support for career development** is neither strategic nor structured. This appears to affect women's publication rates and grant funding, which in turn affects retention.

Taking an intersectional approach

> For more information on Intersectionality in the SAGE Athena Swan pathway, please refer to Guidance on Intersectionality for the SAGE Athena Swan Accreditation Pathway

Intersectionality recognises that people's identities are shaped by a range of factors including age, cultural background, disability, gender identity and/or expression, intersex status, religion and/or belief, sexuality, and socioeconomic background. These factors intersect to contribute to an individual's unique experiences and perspectives. They cannot be considered independently from one another since they interact, often compounding inequity.

While the Athena Swan application has a focus on gender, intersectionality reminds us that people of any particular gender identity are not a homogeneous group. Therefore, Institutions must demonstrate an intersectional approach to their self-assessment and action planning. Doing so will help the Institution better understand the lived experiences of staff and students, and the barriers they face; and to develop effective strategies to support the attraction, retention and progression of all.

At all levels of the SAGE Athena Swan process, Institutions are expected to collect and analyse data through an intersectional lens wherever possible. Recognising Athena Swan's focus on gender, Institutions are expected to address, **at minimum**, the following intersections when applying for a Bronze or Silver Award:

- Gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background[2]
- Gender and cultural background[3]
- Gender and disability status[4]
- Gender and sexuality[5]

To maintain individual privacy and confidentiality, data may be presented as ≤6 where fewer than 6 (but more than 0) people identify in a category.

Institutions may also choose to demonstrate their consideration of other characteristics that intersect with gender, such as age, socioeconomic background, religion or belief.

Further, Institutions may conduct more multivariate analysis, for example by considering *gender × cultural background × sexuality*. A fully intersectional analysis allows for a deeper understanding of compounded disadvantage and should be an aspiration for all Institutions. However, it also complicates quantitative analysis and, when working with small numbers, may result in the uncovering of individual, rather than systemic, disadvantage.

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[2] SAGE suggests following the current ABS Indigenous Status Standard.
[3] SAGE suggests following the approach endorsed by Diversity Council Australia, which is based on current ABS Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG).
[4] SAGE suggests following the guidance provided by the Australian Network on Disability in their resource Sharing and Monitoring Disability Information in your Workforce: A Guide for Employers.
[5] SAGE suggests following the current ABS Standard for Sexual Orientation.

Acknowledging that many Institutions beginning on the Athena Swan journey may not have the systems in place to collect detailed demographic data, intersectionality needs to be considered in increased detail at higher Athena Swan Award levels.

At Bronze level, Institutions are expected to consider an intersectional approach to:

- identifying gaps in data collection processes and systems
- engaging with those with diverse lived experiences
- developing a safe and inclusive Institutional environment
- supporting the attraction, retention and progression of all staff (and students, if applicable)

Where an Institution's ability to take an intersectional approach to data collection and analysis is limited, the application should acknowledge these limitations and present data as available. The application should outline planned actions to enable future capture of this data, including actions that aim to build a safe environment for disclosure, to build trust, and to communicate the reasons for collecting such data.

While initially it may not be possible to take an intersectional approach to quantitative data collection and analysis, actions can still be devised based on qualitative data and/or the advice of external experts. A lack of quantitative data should not preclude addressing the compounded inequities experienced by underrepresented groups.

THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The success of the Athena Swan application process depends on an Institution assuming a collective responsibility for gender equity, diversity and inclusion. It is neither feasible, nor recommended, that any one individual be responsible for completing the whole application. The final submission should be the result of collaborative work across the Institution.

What does the Self-Assessment Team do?

The role of the Athena Swan self-assessment team (the SAT[6]) is to facilitate a coordinated, collaborative and cohesive approach to the process of data collection, analysis, and action planning that forms the basis of the application for an Athena Swan Award, and also to steer and monitor implementation of the action plan. A key outcome is to evidence in the Athena Swan application a consultative, inclusive, and accountable approach to identifying and understanding issues, devising actions for improvement, and implementing those actions.

The SAT, in consultation with senior leadership, should guide the Institution's vision for gender equity, diversity, and inclusion; address how Athena Swan fits within this vision, and enable the Institution to achieve it; and determine the indicators and metrics to measure achievement of progress, impact, and improvement.

The SAT will:

- conduct an in-depth self-assessment of the Institution's structures, systems and culture to identify gaps in and barriers to gender equity, diversity, and inclusion. In doing so, the team will:
    - collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data on gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Institution
    - assess how institutional processes and practices, and implementation of Institutional policies, affect staff (and students, if applicable)
- propose a robust and measurable action plan to address the five Key Barriers to attraction, retention and progression and thus to improve gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Institution
- promote SAGE and Athena Swan through the Institution, and coordinate communication and consultation with staff (and students, if applicable) to inform development and implementation of the action plan
- complete the final Athena Swan application
- steer and monitor implementation of the action plan

The work of Athena Swan does not rest with the SAT alone. The SAT will engage with, and draw support, knowledge, and resources from, senior leaders and staff (and students, if applicable) from across the Institution.

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[6] While this document refers to the self-assessment team as the SAT, the group may have a different name in different Institutions. It may be a group in its own right, either an existing committee (such as an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee) or one formed specifically for the Athena Swan process, or it may be a sub-committee of another group.

As noted above, completing an application requires considerable time and effort, and this should be factored into workload, recognised in appraisal, and considered during promotion.

Where students are involved in the self-assessment process, Institutions should ensure they are provided with appropriate support and training, and that there are mechanisms to recognise and reward their contributions.

Forming the Self-Assessment Team

How should the SAT be formed?

Institutions have discretion in determining the formation, structure, and governance of the SAT, as well as its reporting lines and accountabilities. The SAT may be a group in its own right, either an existing committee (such as Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committees) or one formed specifically for the Athena Swan process, or it may be a sub-committee of another group.

Institutions may assign the self-assessment process and application completion to one group, and the steering and monitoring of action plan implementation to another. If they choose to do so, they should demonstrate planned lines of responsibility and accountability for action plan implementation in their Athena Swan application.

In all cases, the SAT should be connected to the executive (for reporting and accountability) and to the Institution as a whole (to consult, engage, promote, and champion). The SAT must be appropriately resourced to assure delivery of its mandate.

Who should be on the SAT?

An efficient SAT demonstrates the principles of good governance in membership numbers, accountabilities, and reporting lines, and shares the workload effectively amongst its membership. It is valuable for the SAT to have members with expertise in wide-ranging areas, for example:

- equity, diversity and inclusion
- human resources
- communication and engagement
- organisational change and change management
- the collection, management, analysis and presentation of quantitative and qualitative data
- the barriers impacting gender equity, diversity and inclusion in the higher education and research sector
- cross-disciplinary work
- organisational leadership and decision-making

An effective SAT is usually made up of around 10 to 15 people. The SAT should include at least 40% people who identify as men, 40% who identify as women, and, where possible, include people of diverse gender identities and/or gender expressions.

To support the Institution's journey to advancing gender equity, diversity, and inclusion, the SAT should be formed in a way that ensures representation of diverse lived experiences, including, for example:

- Representation across the Institution:
    - diversity of employment classifications
    - diversity of disciplines and work groups
    - senior managers, members of influential committees, and decision makers
- Range of career stages, positions, and levels, including, for example:
    - professional and academic staff
    - postdoctoral and early-to-mid career academics
    - clinicians
    - senior leaders
    - students
- Varying work patterns:
    - part time/full time
    - utilising flexible work practices
    - experience with career interruptions
- Range of caring responsibilities, including, for example:
    - children
    - elderly parents
    - chronic health conditions, disabilities or special needs
- Diverse backgrounds, such as:
    - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
    - people of diverse cultural backgrounds
    - people with disability
    - people of diverse sexes, sexualities, gender identities and/or gender expressions
    - people of varying ages
    - people from varying socio-economic backgrounds
    - people who have followed non-traditional career pathways

How should Institutions recruit SAT members?

Ensuring an inclusive recruiting process will assist in achieving diversity on the SAT. Institutions often consider:

- calling for Expressions of Interest
- working with leadership to identify nominees
- working with employee-led diversity groups to identify nominees
- holding one-on-one meetings with potential SAT members

The SAT should also plan to undertake consultation with, and elicit input from, groups or experts representing the interests and needs of traditionally underrepresented groups – drawing on existing networks and partnerships, where possible.

Organising the self-assessment process

There are many ways of organising the self-assessment process to best suit the Institutional context. One way is to have a small core group who meet frequently to co-ordinate Athena Swan activities, while the rest of the SAT are organised into working groups addressing particular areas of activity, for example:

- different tasks, such as data collection and analysis, or communication and engagement
- specific gender equity, diversity and inclusion issues, including ensuring an intersectional perspective is applied

The SAT should consider establishing terms of reference for the group and creating a project plan to outline the scope of their work, resource requirements, equitable and manageable distribution of workload, monitoring and tracking progress against work activities and milestones, and reporting accountabilities.

How often should the SAT meet?

Each Institution will make decisions regarding how frequently its SAT meets, but it is suggested that meetings are held no less than quarterly. A common approach involves having a core group of SAT members meeting on a fortnightly or monthly basis, with other SAT members or working groups meeting less frequently.

How does the SAT know what data to collect?

Athena Swan Award applications require analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to investigate the structures, systems and culture of the Institution. Details of the data to be collected, analysed, presented and discussed can be found in PART II **- APPLICATION GUIDELINES** of this document.

What resources need to be dedicated to the Athena Swan Award application process?

Applying for an Athena Swan Award involves considerable planning and coordination; data collection, analysis and interpretation; consultation, communication and engagement; action planning; and application writing. The entire process is iterative and requires a substantial commitment in terms of resources from across the Institution.

The Athena Swan process is best managed as a major change management initiative. It requires carefully designed mechanisms to be in place to foster and facilitate the Athena SWAN process over an extended period of time. All Institutions are encouraged to give early and adequate consideration to planning and resourcing the SAT and its process. The following are recommended for an effective process:

- Executive Management responsible and accountable for resourcing the SAT process. It is advisable to treat the process as core business with an allocated budget and reporting requirements.
- Dedicated project management resource and detailed project plan, with built-in check points to review progress, and explicit reporting milestones. These should guide allocation of new resources, or re-distribution of workload as needed throughout the process, and will likely be aligned to quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis, and interpretation; communication and engagement; action planning; as well as write up and internal and/or external review (for example, by critical friends).
- Explicit and transparent allocation of responsibilities to SAT members, with careful consideration of workload.
- Early identification of quantitative and qualitative data sources and data gaps. Institutions are encouraged to determine what data are currently collected by institutional systems, and

identify what additional data needs to be collected. It is also important to explore available qualitative data sources early in the process, as this will guide what qualitative research to undertake and when to commence.

- Expertise in designing and planning actions, and implementing change management approaches. Organisational change is complex and involves challenging deep-seated beliefs and assumptions.
- Completion of a preliminary draft 6-8 months in advance of submission to allow time for review by the Head of Institution; consultation with and/or consideration by the Board; assessment of alignment with the Institution's strategic priorities; opportunity for review by critical friends; further engagement/consultation as may be required; and refinement of the final submission.
- Prioritisation of institutional actions to address Key Barriers impacting gender equity, diversity, and inclusion, in alignment with the Institution's vision, and existing equity, diversity and inclusion strategies and initiatives.
- Succession planning for the SAT and its role in implementing the action plan; governance, accountability, and reporting lines within the Institution; and the mechanism for monitoring and reporting on implementation.

The Institution's executive management has control and discretion in organising and resourcing the self-assessment process and implementation of the action plan; therefore, providing specific estimates on the amount and type of human and financial resources required are impractical. However, it is evident that resource requirements vary considerably depending on the size, complexity, and composition of the Institution; the size of the SAT; and the distribution of workload across its members.

DATA GUIDANCE

Data should be used to provide the evidence required for the Bronze Award, and to inform the development of a five-year action plan to remove or reduce five Key Barriers and thus advance GEDI across the Institution.

General data guidance

The guidelines in PART II - APPLICATION GUIDELINES outline the data to be collected, analysed and discussed for each section and sub-section of the application. **Because Athena Swan applications have a focus on gender, disaggregation of the quantitative and qualitative data by gender is essential throughout the application.**

Terminology

Throughout the application, the Institution must provide definitions of its own terminology, outline leave entitlements, etc., to enable reviewers to understand the application without prior knowledge of the Institution.

Time period

Data should be presented for three consecutive years preceding the submission, to allow for detection of trends and to assist Institutions to uncover and understand where entrenched issues may exist.

Institutions should leave one year clear for data analysis, action planning and for writing the application. For example, applications submitted in March 2023 should include quantitative data collected in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Quantitative data should be presented annually, and may be based on either the calendar year, the financial year, or the 12-month period from 1 April to 31 March to align with, and leverage, WGEA reporting, as desired by the applicant. The reporting period should be stated in the application and, if any periods of data collection differ across sections of the application, each period should be stated and the rationale for the variation provided.

Who to count

All staff who are **paid by the Higher Education Institution and subject to Australian employment laws**, including casual staff, should be counted as staff for the purposes of collecting quantitative data for the application. This includes postdoctoral researchers.

Those **not paid by the Institution**, such as affiliates, adjuncts, voluntary unpaid academics, and visiting academics who are paid by their home Institution, should **not** be included in the quantitative data collection. However, they should be invited to contribute to the qualitative data collection as appropriate. An overview of this group should be included in the application.

Staff on overseas campuses who are subject to local employment laws may be included at the Institution's discretion, with the rationale provided. Where a Higher Education Institution refrains from collecting data or implementing actions because it is aware that these may pose a risk to its

staff at international campuses, an explanation should be included in the application as appropriate.

Classifying employees of the Institution

For the purposes of the application, Higher Education Institutions should follow the Department of Education Staff Classifications[7], that is *Academic Classification, Level* (e.g. Academic, Level A); *Higher Education Worker, Level* (e.g. HEW, Level 8); or, infrequently, non-academic classification (where the person is below HEW 1 or above HEW 10).

Where the Institution uses additional employment classification types and levels, they should explain the employment classification types and levels used within the organisation.

Organisational sub-units

In the application, where appropriate, Institutions should disaggregate data by organisational sub-unit. This allows the Institution to identify local areas where there may be specific Barriers to the attraction, retention and/or progression of underrepresented groups.

In different Institutions, these sub-units will be named differently (e.g. Faculty, School, College, etc.). In most cases, the organisational sub-unit will have sufficient autonomy to facilitate independent decision-making, to exercise change management decisions, and to implement actions to effect localised change.

Within the application, Institutions should explain the sub-unit structure used to disaggregate data.

Disaggregation by gender

Throughout the application, data should be disaggregated by gender into the categories **M** (describes their gender as man or male), **F** (describes their gender as woman or female), or **X** (describes their gender as non-binary or describes their gender as a term other than man/male, woman/female or non-binary). A category of **Z** can be used where a person prefers not to respond on how they describe their gender. This follows the current ABS Standard for Gender.

Where this disaggregation is not possible, reasons for this should be explained and, in most cases, actions created to enable the future capture of these data.

Where fewer than 6 (but more than 0) people identify in a category, and where it is important to protect individual privacy, data should be presented as ≤6.

Since transgender staff/students may describe their gender as any of the above, they may not be immediately visible in the Institution's data. Nevertheless, Institutions should work to ensure the specific inequities faced by transgender people are addressed in their gender equity work.

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[7] Element No. 408 in the Higher Education Data Collection Element Dictionary.

Disaggregation by intersectional characteristics

For more information on Intersectionality in the SAGE Athena Swan pathway, please refer to Guidance on Intersectionality for the SAGE Athena Swan Accreditation Pathway

Throughout the application, data should be disaggregated by intersectional characteristics in addition to gender. Institutions are expected to address, at minimum, the intersections of:

- gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background[8]
- gender and cultural background[9]
- gender and disability status[10]
- gender and sexuality[11]

Institutions may also choose to report on other intersectional characteristics, such as age, socio-economic background, religion or belief.

Where fewer than 6 (but more than 0) people identify in a category, and where it is important to protect individual privacy, data should be presented as ≤6.

Where an Institution's ability to take an intersectional approach to data collection and analysis is limited, the application should acknowledge these limitations and present data as available. The application should outline planned actions to enable future capture of this data, including actions that aim to build a safe environment for disclosure, to build trust, and to communicate the reasons for collecting such data (see Addressing data gaps).

Headcount or full-time equivalent (FTE)

Data should be collected by both headcount **and** FTE as this will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the state of GEDI in the Institution, and the structures, systems and culture which contribute to inequities.

Proportion of the eligible cohort

In many parts of the application (e.g. when looking at uptake rates, application rates, success rates, etc.), data should be presented both as **headcount** and as **proportion of the eligible cohort**.

For example, when studying promotions, Institutions should look at:

- application rates (as % eligible cohort)
  i.e. what proportion of those eligible to apply for promotion do apply?
- success rates (as % applications)
  i.e. what proportion of those who applied for promotion were successfully promoted?

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[8] SAGE suggests following the current ABS Indigenous Status Standard.
[9] SAGE suggests following the approach endorsed by Diversity Council Australia, which is based on current ABS Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG).
[10] SAGE suggests following the guidance provided by the Australian Network on Disability in their resource Sharing and Monitoring Disability Information in your Workforce: A Guide for Employers.
[11] SAGE suggests following the current ABS Standard for Sexual Orientation.

Compared to simply showing the *numbers* of applications and successes, this approach provides deeper insight into any issues affecting specific stages/aspects of the promotions process. For instance, are certain groups deterred from applying, being assessed unfairly, or both?

Similarly, to best understand potential barriers in the recruitment process, Institutions should explore:

- Number of applications (as headcount)
  *As it is not feasible to determine the size of the eligible cohort for recruitment, applications do **not** need to be presented as a proportion of the eligible cohort.*

- Interview rates (as % applications)

- Offer rates (as % interviews)

- Acceptance rates (as % offers)

Addressing data gaps

Where data are not available, reasons for this should be explained and, in most cases, an action created for the future capture of these data.

With regard to collecting data on intersectional characteristics, it is important to remember that disclosure must be voluntary. Institutions should work with groups representing the interests and needs of diverse groups, such as staff-led diversity groups or external experts, to build a safe environment for disclosure, to build trust, and to communicate the reasons for collecting such data.

While initially it may not be possible to collect quantitative data for all questions and/or for all intersectional identities, actions can still be devised based on qualitative data and the advice of experts. A lack of quantitative data should not preclude addressing the additional inequities experienced by underrepresented groups, including trans and gender diverse people.

Gender balance

The SAGE Athena Swan framework considers gender balance to be 40% women, 40% men, 20% people of any gender. Applying a 40:40:20 approach (as opposed to a 50:50 approach) is inclusive of those identifying outside of the gender binary, which is a key principle of the Athena Swan Charter. Compared to a 50:50 approach, 40:40:20 also better accommodates minor fluctuations and is more realistic when working with small numbers.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data, from surveys, focus groups, or other forms of qualitative research, should be used throughout the application, where appropriate, to provide evidence of engagement with staff (and where relevant, students) to better understand the structures, systems and culture in the Institution, and to develop appropriate actions to address issues identified.

All data should be disaggregated by gender, and by intersectional characteristics where possible.

SAGE maintains a bank of survey questions tailored for Athena Swan Award applications to assist subscribers with their qualitative data collection. Institutions may choose to utilise this to collect qualitative data or to guide the design of their own survey tools.

Presenting data

Within the body of the application, data should be presented in the form that best highlights the inequities apparent in the organisation and the barriers to attraction, retention and progression that contribute to these inequities. Where data are presented as percentages, raw numbers should also be included. For many sub-sections of the application, data should be presented as Proportion of the eligible cohort.

Figures and tables should be clearly labelled, easy to read and interpret, and accessible to colour blind readers (for example, by avoiding problematic colour combinations, or including contrasting patterns in addition to colour).[12]

All figures and tables should be cross-referenced in the narrative, and the key points analysed, interpreted, and discussed.

While some data and graphs may be similar across applications, the narrative will be context specific and unique since it will be important for each Institution to discuss its own issues and actions.

Benchmarking

Appropriate benchmarking should be used to drive aspirations, to ascertain where there may be good practice to learn from, to measure the impact of initiatives, and to assist in setting targets for the future. Benchmarking can be done both internally and externally.

The Athena Swan process is not prescriptive in what data are used for benchmarking since this is dependent on context. Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to consider data published by WGEA, Australia's research funding bodies (the Australian Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council), Universities Australia, and the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, as applicable. Where possible, SAGE may facilitate access to other data sets that may be of relevance to guide benchmarking.

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[12] See, for example, How to design for color blindness

For all benchmarking, Higher Education Institutions should outline which benchmarking data source has been used, the timeframe the data refer to, and why that source was selected.

WRITING THE APPLICATION

Since reviewers will be judging the application as a standalone document, clarity, honesty, and detail are essential.

The narrative in every section of the application should be written with gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in mind. The content should be focused, specific, and precise. Vague language should be avoided in favour of actual data (e.g. '75% of ...' as opposed to 'substantial').

General style guidance

Font

To ensure that applications are clear and legible, Calibri 11 pt font is recommended for all body text.

Margins

Standard margin sizes of 2.54 cm should be used.

Colour

Applications will be submitted electronically as a PDF document. Charts, diagrams, etc. may therefore be produced in colour. Please ensure that applications are accessible to colour blind readers, for example by avoiding problematic colour combinations, or including contrasting patterns in addition to colour.

Word limit

The overall word limit for a Bronze Award application is **14,000**. The action plan is excluded from the word count. The word limit is 'as counted by Word (or other word processing program)'. This simplifies the word count process by removing ambiguity associated with the determination of words to be counted.
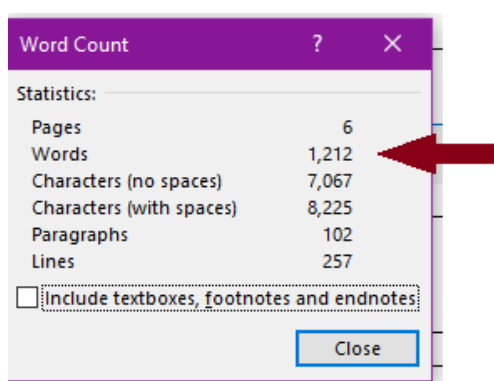
In Word, it is possible to exclude textboxes from the word count, so graphs/tables etc. should be included as textboxes and thus excluded from word count.

While the application form provides suggested word counts for Sections 1-4 (Table 1), there are no specific word limits for the individual sections, and words may be distributed throughout the application as appropriate. Please state in the application the number of words used for each section.

Table 1. Suggested word count for Sections throughout the Bronze Award application.

Section	Word Count (Total 14,000)
1. Letter from the Head of the Institution	1,000
2. Self-Assessment Process	500
3. The Institution Workforce	2,500
4. Workplace Barriers and Enablers	10,000
5. Action Plan	N/A

Extensions to the word limit

No extensions to the word limit will be granted. The word count for the Bronze applications has been increased from the SAGE Pilot phase. This increase facilitates the provision of depth and breadth of information.

Screenshots and pictures

Institutions may use screenshots or pictures as part of their applications; these images should be clear and legible.

Embedding actions within the narrative

The body of the application should outline the actions which will be implemented to address identified gaps in GEDI at the Institution. Actions should be incorporated into the related narrative that outlines the issues identified; doing so assists the Institution to demonstrate the **connection between the issue and action**. There is no need for the narrative to describe each action in full; however, a brief description of the action should be provided, along with a cross-reference to the action plan.

Glossary

Applications may include a glossary of frequently used terms and/or acronyms. This will **not** be included in the word count.

Appendices

Appendices are not to be included.

Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are **not** to be included. Information that is relevant and expected to be considered by the reviewers should be incorporated into the body of the application.

Page Numbers

Page numbers should be included to assist with the peer review process.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Eligibility for submission

Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria at the time of submission and for the duration of the peer review period. Specifically, the Higher Education Institution must:

- meet the definition of a Higher Education Institution on page 5
- adhere to the overall application word limit
- submit by the submission deadline
- have signed and submitted, as part of the letter of endorsement within the application, a declaration that the information and data presented are an honest, original, accurate, and true representation of the Institution

Should a Higher Education Institution intending to apply for an Athena Swan award be undergoing or have undergone a recent restructure, the Institution is strongly encouraged to consider the implications of structural change on its readiness (or otherwise) to apply for an award. This is particularly relevant where such changes have a significant impact on institutional structures, systems, or culture; data collection and analysis; or on the relevance of proposed actions and initiatives.

Submission process

Applications will be submitted electronically as a single PDF document via an online portal. An acknowledgement that the application has been successfully submitted will be generated automatically by the portal. If an acknowledgment is not received, applicants should contact SAGE by email (sage@sciencegenderequity.org.au).

Submission deadline

The submission deadline for applications is 5 pm (local time in the subscriber's region) on the last working day of March. Unless prior approval has been granted, applications not submitted by the deadline will not be progressed to peer review assessment.

> For information on applying for an extension to the submission deadline, please refer to Requests for extensions: submission deadline.

Where submissions include confidential information regarding individuals, applicants will be responsible for providing a redacted version of their application to SAGE four weeks after the submission deadline. The definition of confidential information, and management thereof, is detailed in the SAGE Subscriber Terms and Conditions.

Post-submission screening

Once submitted, and before being distributed to reviewers, applications will be checked by SAGE to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria. Where an eligibility criterion is not met due, for example, to minor omission or error, SAGE may request the applicant rectify the situation. If the applicant fails to address such a request within the allowed timeframe, SAGE will remove the application from the assessment round.

PART II - APPLICATION GUIDELINES

These guidelines are provided to assist Higher Education Institutions when preparing their applications for an Athena Swan Bronze Award. They summarise relevant information that should be included within each section of the application. This information is not exhaustive; applicants should include and discuss any and all issues that are relevant to their Institution. While some data and graphs may be similar across applications, the narrative will be unique since each Higher Education Institution must discuss its own issues and actions.

Since peer review panels will comprise members with a broad range of expertise, it is important that applications are written for a varied audience. Reviewers will base their assessment solely on the information provided in the application. No external links or prior knowledge will inform the review process or guide the panel discussions.

Quantitative data should be shown for three consecutive years for a Bronze Award; a clear explanation should be included if this is not possible. Qualitative data should be used throughout the application, where appropriate.

All data should be disaggregated by gender, by intersectional characteristics, and by any other specified groups for each section.

The overall word limit for an application is 14,000 words for a Bronze Award[13].

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[13] See Table on page 19.

SECTION 1 - LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF THE INSTITUTION

Recommended word count: Bronze - 1000 words

This section should provide a description of the Higher Education Institution to help all Panellists understand the context of the application without prior knowledge. In preparing this section, applicants should assume that Panellists have no prior knowledge of the Institution; its size, structure, or research profile; its demographics; or the Institution's gender equity, diversity and inclusion issues, challenges and/or achievements.

The Letter must:

- include a statement that the information presented in the application (including data) is an honest, original, accurate, and true representation of the Institution, and that the application complies with the word limit

The Letter should:

- outline and discuss the Institution's structure, including any features of relevance to its governance and workforce
- outline and discuss governance and reporting structures, particularly those differing from higher education and research sector norms
- provide a high-level, current snapshot, summary profile of the Institution's staff and students, in the form of a table showing numbers and proportions, disaggregated by gender, employment classification type[14] and organisational sub-unit[15]. Where possible, data should also be disaggregated by intersectional characteristics.[16]
- demonstrate support, commitment, and investment, not only from the organisation but an individual commitment to gender equity, diversity, and inclusion from the Head of Institution
- outline why the Institution values the SAGE objectives and Athena Swan principles
- comment on how staff at all levels are, and will continue to be, engaged, supported and resourced to implement the Athena Swan principles and the self-assessment process
- highlight the five Key Barriers to attraction, retention and progression, and thus to gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Institution; explain how the action plan and activities in the Institution will be championed and resourced to remove or reduce these barriers and to drive sustainable change; explain how actions will be monitored to evidence their impact and their contribution to the Institution's strategic aims

If the Head of the Institution is soon to be/has recently been succeeded, the application should include an additional short letter [not exceeding 250 words] from the incoming Head

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[14] The Institution should explain the employment classification types and levels that it will use throughout the application. See Classifying employees of the Institution
[15] See Organisational sub-units
[16] as outlined on page 11

demonstrating their support and commitment. This second letter will be excluded from the application word count.

The letter(s) should be addressed to the SAGE Chief Executive Officer.

SECTION 2 - THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Recommended word count: Bronze - 500 words

This section gives the Institution the opportunity to demonstrate that the self-assessment process was inclusive, representative, well-governed, adequately resourced, and aligned with the Institution's strategic priorities and objectives.

(i) a description of the self-assessment team

This sub-section should:

- describe each member's role within the Institution, and their role and contribution to the SAT
- summarise the relevant lived experiences and expertise of the SAT members
- describe how the time commitment involved in being a member of the SAT is recognised and rewarded

(ii) an account of the self-assessment process

This sub-section should:

- describe the formation of the SAT, its structure, governance and work processes
- outline the internal and external consultation the SAT undertook to ensure input from people with diverse lived experiences and expertise was achieved
- describe the integration of the SAT within the Institution's reporting structures
- describe how the SAT engaged with and supported broader Institutional equity initiatives

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

This sub-section should:

- describe the continuation of the SAT (or similar group) post-submission and address succession planning in this group
- outline the role of the SAT (or the group responsible) in monitoring the implementation of the action plan and updating staff

SECTION 3 - THE INSTITUTION WORKFORCE

Recommended word count: Bronze - 2,500 words

Section 3 explores current state of gender equity, diversity and inclusion in the Institution.

Section 3 comprises two parts:

        3.1 Staff data[17]

        3.2 Student data (if applicable)

Each part contains a number of sub-sections. Institutions are required to investigate each sub-section to understand the current state of gender equity, diversity and inclusion in the Institution.

> **Overarching guidance for Section 3**
>
> Each sub-section should, where appropriate:
>
> - present and discuss data for different employment classification types[18] separately
> - summarise and discuss the data (numbers and percentages) by gender, and identify and discuss any differences between relevant groups
> - summarise and discuss the data by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality, and identify and discuss any differences between relevant groups
> - identify and discuss any differences between part-time and full-time staff (and students, if applicable)
> - identify and discuss any differences across multiple variables (e.g. classification type/level and contract type)
> - identify and discuss trends over time (at least three years for Bronze)
> - discuss existing initiatives and actions, and impact to date
> - discuss planned initiatives and actions to address any issues identified

Additional specific guidance is provided for each sub-section below.

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[17] See Who to count

[18] The Institution should explain the employment classification types and levels that it will use throughout the application, and should present data for different employment classification separately, where appropriate. See Classifying employees of the Institution

3.1 Staff Data

(i) Staff by employment classification type and level[19]

Data required:

- Number of staff (by headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE)) at each employment classification type and level by gender
- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) at each employment classification type and level by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) at each employment classification type and level by gender and full-time or part-time status
- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) at each employment classification type and level by gender by Organisational sub-unit[20]

This sub-section should also:

- explain the employment classification types and levels used in the Institution
- identify and discuss any differences in the career pipeline of different employment classification types in the Institution

(ii) Staff by contract type (continuing, fixed-term, and casual contracts)

Data required:

Present and discuss data for different employment classification types[21] separately.

- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) by contract type by gender
- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) by contract type by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) by contract type[22] by gender and full-time or part-time status
- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) by contract type by gender and Organisational sub-unit[23]

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[19] The Institution should explain the employment classification types and levels that it will use throughout the application. See Classifying employees of the Institution
[20] See Organisational sub-units
[21] Institutions should present data for different employment classification separately, where appropriate.
[22] continuing or fixed-term only
[23] See Organisational sub-units

This sub-section should also:

- discuss any existing mechanisms to enable continuity of employment within the Institution and/or the broader sector

(iii) Staff by contract function (research-only; teaching & research; teaching-only)

Data required:

Present data for academic staff only.

- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) by contract function by gender
- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) by contract function by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) by contract function[24] by gender and full-time or part-time status
- Number of staff (by headcount and FTE) by contract function by gender and Organisational sub-unit[25]

This sub-section should also:

- discuss any differences in career development support or the career pathway for different contract functions

(iv) Staff exit data

Data required:

- Exit rates[26], by reason[27] by gender for each employment classification type and level
- Exit rates, by reason by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- Exit rates, by reason by gender and full-time or part-time status
- Exit rates, by reason by gender and Organisational sub-unit[28]

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[24] continuing or fixed-term only
[25] See Organisational sub-units
[26] See Proportion of the eligible cohort
[27] Divide at minimum into contract non-renewal, resignation, voluntary redundancy, compulsory redundancy, retirement, other.
[28] See Organisational sub-units

This sub-section should also:

- describe mechanisms for collecting qualitative exit data from leavers
- identify and discuss the main reasons for resignation
- outline and discuss destination data for leavers, if available

(v) Composition of the Institution's Governing Body and Decision-making Committees

Data required:

For the Institution's Governing Body

- Members (headcount and percentage) by gender
- Members (headcount and percentage) by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality

For the Institution's Decision-making Committees[29]

For each Committee:

- Members (headcount and percentage) by gender and employment classification type and level (including students if applicable)
- Members (headcount and percentage) by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality

Across all Committees:

- Proportion of Chairs by gender
- Proportion of Secretaries by gender

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss the process for deciding membership (and roles) of decision-making committees

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[29] Institutions should decide on and justify the committees included in this section.

(vi) Pay Equity

Data required:

For this section, only the most recent year's data is required.

Undertake a gender pay gap analysis[30] of the Institution's workforce to identify any:

- organisation-wide pay gap (i.e. comparing average remuneration by gender across the whole organisation)
- like-for-like pay gap (i.e. comparing remuneration for work of equal or comparable value)
- by-level pay gap (i.e. comparing remuneration for work of comparable responsibility, e.g. at the same level in the organisational hierarchy)

Present the results of the three gap analyses above for:

- Base salary
- Total remuneration, including allowances, bonuses, performance payments, discretionary pay, overtime and superannuation
- Starting salaries
- Annual salary increases

This sub-section should also:

- summarise and discuss findings from the pay equity analysis

Where possible, Institutions should also undertake a gender pay gap analysis with an intersectional lens to identify any inequities based on *gender x Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background*; *gender x cultural background*; *gender x disability status*; and *gender x sexuality*.

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[30] The Workplace Gender Equality Agency has comprehensive resources relating to Gender Pay Equity, including how to undertake a gender pay gap analysis, on its website at https://www.wgea.gov.au/pay-equity. SAGE advises all institutions to utilise WGEA's methodology when undertaking the gender pay gap analysis.

3.2 Student Data

(i) Undergraduate students

Data required:

- Undergraduate student recruitment data[31] (number of applications; offer rates; enrolment rates) by course by gender
- Undergraduate student recruitment data (number of applications; offer rates; enrolment rates) by course by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- Undergraduate degree classification by course by gender[32]
- Undergraduate student attrition rates[33] by course by gender[34]

This sub-section should also:

- summarise and discuss the selection process for students
- summarise and discuss any differences in degree attainment and attrition rates

(ii) Postgraduate Degree by Coursework students

Data required:

- Postgraduate degree by coursework student recruitment data[35] (number of applications; offer rates; enrolment rates) by course by gender
- Postgraduate degree by coursework student recruitment data (number of applications; offer rates; enrolment rates) by course by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- Postgraduate degree by coursework student attrition rates[36] by course by gender[37]

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[31] See Proportion of the eligible cohort

[32] Where possible, Institutions should also disaggregate data to identify any differences based on *gender x Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender x cultural background; gender x disability status*; and *gender x sexuality*

[33] Proportion of students leaving without completing their undergraduate degree

[34] Where possible, Institutions should also disaggregate data to identify any differences based on *gender x Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender x cultural background; gender x disability status*; and *gender x sexuality*

[35] See Proportion of the eligible cohort

[36] Proportion of students leaving without completing their postgraduate degree by coursework

[37] Where possible, Institutions should also disaggregate data to identify any differences based on *gender x Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender x cultural background; gender x disability status*; and *gender x sexuality*

This sub-section should also:

- summarise and discuss the application and selection process for students
- identify and discuss any issues in the pipeline between undergraduate and postgraduate degrees within the Institution
- summarise and discuss any differences in degree attainment and attrition rates

(iii) Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students

Data required:

- HDR student recruitment data[38] (number of applications; offer rates; enrolment rates) by gender
- HDR student recruitment data (number of applications; offer rates; enrolment rates) by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- HDR student attrition rates[39] by gender[40]
- Time taken to complete HDR by gender
- HDR student scholarship data (number of applications; offer rates; acceptance rates) by gender
- Average scholarship value ($) by gender

This sub-section should also:

- summarise and discuss the application and selection process for students
- summarise and discuss available scholarships, including the application and selection process
- discuss any differences in the value ($) of scholarships received by gender
- summarise and discuss any differences in students funded through different mechanisms[41]

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[38] See Proportion of the eligible cohort

[39] Proportion of students leaving without completing their HDR

[40] Where possible, Institutions should also disaggregate data to identify any differences based on *gender x Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender x cultural background; gender x disability status*; and *gender x sexuality*

[41] For example, through government RTP schemes, private benevolent funds, the PI's grant, the institution's own funds, self-funded students

SECTION 4 - WORKPLACE BARRIERS

Recommended word count: Bronze - 10,000 words

Section 4 explores the potential structural, systemic and cultural barriers to attraction, retention and progression, and hence to gender equity, diversity and inclusion, in the Institution.

Section 4 comprises four parts:

4.1 Entry to the workforce
4.2 Developing and progressing the workforce
4.3 Support for career interruptions and caring responsibilities
4.4 Providing a safe, equitable, and inclusive environment

Each part contains a number of sub-sections, with each sub-section corresponding to one potential barrier to attraction, retention or progression (and thus GEDI).

When examining these potential barriers, the Institution should explore whether there are any differences in their effect across the range of staff (and, if applicable, students) in the Institution. These barriers may present differently for people of different genders and of different identities; for different employment classifications, functions, and contract types; for part-time and full-time staff; or for those in different organisational sub-units. Disaggregated data should be provided to evidence the differential effects.

Because the barriers will not present, or compound, in the same way for all people of a particular gender, an intersectional lens[42] should be applied when collecting and analysing data, and when designing initiatives to support the attraction, retention and progression of all staff and students.

Having explored the potential barriers in Section 4, the Institution should identify the five Key Barriers which are having the greatest negative effect on the attraction, retention or progression of underrepresented groups of staff (and/or students, if applicable) in the organisation.

Actions to remove or reduce each of these five Key Barriers form the basis of the SAGE Athena Swan Bronze Award Action Plan (SECTION 5 - ACTION PLAN).

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[42] For more information on taking an Intersectional approach, see Guidance on Intersectionality for the SAGE Athena Swan Accreditation Pathway v1.0

Overarching guidance for Section 4

Each sub-section should, where appropriate:

- present and discuss data for different employment classification types[43] separately
- summarise and discuss the quantitative (numbers and percentages) and qualitative data by gender, and identify and discuss any differences between relevant groups
- summarise and discuss the quantitative (numbers and percentages) and qualitative data by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality, and identify and discuss any differences between relevant groups
- identify and discuss any differences between different employment classification types/levels
- identify and discuss any differences between part-time and full-time staff (and students, if applicable)
- identify and discuss any differences across multiple variables (e.g. gender and classification)
- identify and discuss trends over time (at least three years for Bronze)
- discuss existing initiatives and actions, and impact to date
- discuss planned initiatives and actions to address any barriers and issues identified
- discuss how senior staff are held accountable for removing barriers to the attraction, retention and progression, and for improving the culture of the Institution

Additional specific guidance is provided for each sub-section below.

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[43] The Institution should explain the employment classification types and levels that it will use throughout the application, and should present data for different employment classification separately, where appropriate. See Classifying employees of the Institution

4.1 Entry to the workforce

(i) Recruitment

Data required:

- Recruitment data[44] (number of applications; interview rates; offer rates; acceptance rates) by gender and employment classification
- Recruitment data (number of applications; interview rates; offer rates; acceptance rates) by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- Recruitment data (application numbers; interview rates; offer rates; acceptance rates) by gender and Organisational sub-unit[45]

This sub-section should also:

- identify and discuss any differences in the recruitment data between relevant groups
- discuss recruitment policies and processes, including how equity, diversity and inclusion are actively considered
- discuss strategies in place to actively encourage underrepresented groups, including trans and gender diverse people, to apply, and to mitigate against potential bias throughout the recruitment process

(ii) Induction

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss the induction process and support provided to new staff
- summarise and discuss induction uptake rates, by gender
- summarise and discuss how the effectiveness of the induction process is reviewed
- summarise and discuss staff feedback, by gender, on the induction process

(iii) Support given to PhD students for academic career progression

This sub-section should also:

- summarise and discuss any support provided to those finishing a PhD and looking to become an academic
- summarise and discuss student feedback, by gender, on the support provided

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[44] See Proportion of the eligible cohort
[45] See Organisational sub-units

4.2 Developing and progressing the workforce

(i) Professional Development

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss the professional development opportunities available to staff, particularly related to career development, leadership and management
- outline and discuss how staff are informed of, nominated or selected for, and supported in, undertaking professional development opportunities
- outline and discuss how staff are supported and encouraged to participate on internal and external[46] committees
- outline and discuss how committee membership and associated workload are formally recognised
- summarise and discuss uptake rates for various professional development opportunities, by gender and employment classification
- summarise and discuss staff feedback, by gender, on the professional development opportunities available, and the support to undertake them
- outline and discuss the process to monitor and improve the professional development opportunities available

(ii) Support offered when applying for research funding and demonstrating research impact

This sub-section should also:

- summarise and discuss application data for relevant external (e.g. ARC/NHMRC) and internal grants and funding[47], including application and success rates, by gender
- discuss how research impact[48] is assessed and recognised in the Institution
- summarise and discuss data related to demonstrations of research impact, by gender
- outline and discuss any support available to staff applying for research funding or fellowships, instigating collaborations, and/or demonstrating research impact

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[46] These should be committees external to the Institution but relevant to the discipline(s), where the Institution directs, supports or encourages the staff member to participate

[47] Consider those grants and funding schemes that are most relevant for the Institution

[48] Consider those demonstrations of research impact that are most relevant for the Institution, for example research publications, commercialisation, patents, etc.

(iii) Workload

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss how workload is allocated (including, for example, research, administrative, and/or service responsibilities)
- summarise and discuss rates of staff involvement in service activities.[49] by gender, and how service is recognised and rewarded
- summarise and discuss staff feedback, by gender, on workload, allocation of workload, and recognition of the various workload components

(iv) Appraisal/development review

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss the current appraisal/development review process for all employment classification types, including what is expected to be covered
- summarise and discuss completion rates of appraisal/development review, and staff feedback on the process, by gender
- outline and discuss any support for appraisers and appraisees to prepare for the appraisal/development review process, including uptake of such support, by gender

(v) Promotion and pathways for career development

Data required:

- Promotion (or other relevant pathways) data[50] (application rates; success rates) by gender and employment classification
- Promotion (or other relevant pathways) data (application rates; success rates) by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- Promotion (or other relevant pathways) data (application rates; success rates) by gender and part-time or full-time status
- Promotion (or other relevant pathways) data (application rates; success rates) by gender and Organisational sub-unit[51]

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[49] Consider those forms of service that are most relevant for the Institution.
[50] See Proportion of the eligible cohort
[51] See Organisational sub-units

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss pathways for horizontal and vertical mobility in the Institution, such as transition between role or classification types, promotion, internal recruitment, secondment, regrading, etc.
- identify and discuss any differences in the promotion (or other relevant pathways) data between relevant groups
- outline and discuss the relevant processes and criteria, including how information regarding opportunities is communicated to staff, and any support offered to staff preparing an application
- outline how pay is determined in cases of vertical movement, and comment on whether there is any evidence of a gender pay gap in these situations
- comment on staff feedback, by gender, on the available pathways and support for horizontal and vertical mobility

4.3 Support for career interruptions and caring responsibilities

(i) Parental leave uptake and return rate

Data required:

- Uptake and return rates for parental leave[52] (including returning on reduced hours), by gender and employment classification type/level[53]
- Proportion of staff remaining in their post 6, 12 and 18 months after return from parental leave, by gender and employment classification type/level
- Uptake and return rates for parental leave (including returning on reduced hours), by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality
- Proportion of staff remaining in their post 6, 12 and 18 months after return from parental leave, by gender and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender and cultural background; gender and disability status; gender and sexuality

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss any available parental leave entitlements and arrangements
- comment on how the Institution promotes and actively encourages use of parental leave entitlements

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[52] See Proportion of the eligible cohort
[53] See Classifying employees of the Institution

(ii) Support and cover for parental leave: Before, during and after leave

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss how staff are supported before parental leave begins
- outline and discuss any arrangements for parental leave cover that are put in place before leave begins
- outline and discuss the support the Institution offers during parental leave
- outline and discuss any arrangements that enable staff, if they wish, to keep in touch during leave
- outline and discuss the support the Institution offers on return from parental leave, including any funding provided to support returning staff
- outline and discuss any support provided to managers to help them better support staff taking parental leave
- comment on staff feedback, by gender, on the support provided before, during and after parental leave

(iii) Childcare provisions

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss any institutional childcare provisions
- discuss uptake rates and the way any shortfall in provisions is addressed
- comment on staff feedback, by gender, on the availability of childcare

(iv) Carer's leave, caring and cultural responsibilities, and extended personal leave

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss the leave entitlements for carers; those requiring extended personal leave for medical or other reasons; those affirming their gender; those requiring leave to undertake cultural responsibilities; or those experiencing family or domestic violence
- summarise and discuss uptake rates by gender
- comment on the support mechanisms, other than leave, which exist in these situations
- outline and discuss any support provided to managers to help them better support staff with caring and cultural responsibilities, requiring extended leave, or in other extenuating circumstances

4.4 Providing a safe, equitable, and inclusive environment

Recognising that the intersection of gender equity and other facets of a person's identity contributes to their lived experience and perspective, this section should examine how the Institution creates a safe and inclusive environment which supports the attraction, retention and progression of all staff and students.

(i) Institutional culture

Data required:

Present response rates for the % of the workforce who *strongly agree* or *agree* to the following (or similar) statements[54].

Disaggregate by gender; gender x Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background; gender x cultural background; gender x disability status; gender x sexuality

- My line manager genuinely supports gender equity, diversity & inclusion
- I feel like I belong at [organisation]
- Administrative tasks that don't have a specific owner (e.g. taking notes in meetings, scheduling events, cleaning up shared space) are fairly divided at [organisation]
- My organisation believes that people can greatly improve their talents and abilities
- I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences
- Perspectives like mine are included in decision making at [organisation]

This sub-section should:

- reflect on the culture of the Institution, including the language, behaviours, and other informal interactions used by staff (and students if applicable) that characterise the atmosphere of the Institution
- discuss any staff, and student if applicable, consultation relating to the Institution's culture
- summarise and discuss any data gathered around the culture, paying particular attention to the experiences of underrepresented groups, including trans and gender diverse people
- explain how the Institution defines inclusion/an inclusive workplace culture, and discuss how existing and planned actions and initiatives align with this

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[54] These statements provide insights into diversity & inclusion in the organisation through the dimensions of diversity, belonging, fairness, opportunity, voice and decision-making in the organisation. The statements are not exhaustive; Institutions can, and should, collect whatever data they require to understand the employee experience and to advance GEDI in the organisation.

Institutions using existing survey tools may present data relating to questions which assess the same parameters.

- explain how leaders at all levels are held accountable for creating an inclusive culture within their teams
- explain how the Institution ensures that the work of creating an inclusive culture is shared equitably

(ii) Preventing and responding to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination

Data required:

- de-identified data[55] on cases of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination, including:
  - number of cases
  - themes (e.g. inappropriate jokes/comments/contact; ableist, racist, homophobic or transphobic language; repeated propositions; deliberate exclusion; etc.)
  - time to resolve issues
  - support provided for parties involved
  - outcomes (e.g. termination, financial settlement, warning, other consequences)
  - decision-making framework that guided the Institution's response
  - preventative action taken by the Institution as a result

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss how the Institution's leadership, at all levels from the Executive team to the local level, is held accountable for preventing and responding to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination in the Institution
- outline and discuss how the Institution identifies high-risk groups and settings for bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination, beyond complaints made
- outline and discuss how the Institution builds knowledge to ensure consistent implementation of Institutional policies and practices designed to prevent and respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination
- outline and discuss how the Institution captures complaints of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination, including historical complaints against staff members who may have since left the Institution
- outline and discuss the support provided for people who have experienced bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination
- outline and discuss how the Institution responds to reports of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination
- outline and discuss how the Institution measures the prevalence of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination

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[55] If possible while maintaining privacy, disaggregate by gender and intersectional characteristics

(iii) Flexible work practices

Data required:

- Application and approval rates[56] for flexible work arrangements[57], by gender and employment classification type[58]

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss any formal and informal systems for arranging to work flexibly
- outline and discuss any support given to staff wishing to transition between part-time and full-time work
- outline and discuss how the Institution promotes flexibility in work practices
- outline and discuss how the timing of meetings and social gatherings is determined, and reflect on any staff feedback, by gender, regarding the timing of meetings and social gatherings
- outline and discuss any support provided to managers to help them better promote and manage flexibility in work practices
- outline and discuss the culture surrounding flexible work practices in the Institution, and staff feedback on this, by gender

(iv) Equity and Diversity policies and procedures

This sub-section should also:

- outline, discuss, and identify any gaps in the policies, practices, procedures, and programs currently in place in the Institution (excluding those already discussed elsewhere) to:
  - attract and retain staff (and students if applicable) from underrepresented groups, including trans and gender diverse people
  - prevent discrimination
  - promote equity
  - create an inclusive environment
- discuss the feedback received on current policies, practices, procedures and programs; any concerns or issues that have been raised; and any suggestions for improvement that have been made
- outline and discuss the processes by which the Institution ensures that staff with management responsibilities are up to date in their knowledge of policies related to equity and diversity; and how they are supported to implement these consistently

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[56] See Proportion of the eligible cohort
[57] By arrangement type if appropriate
[58] See Classifying employees of the Institution

(v) Equity impact assessment of all policies, practices and procedures

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss how gender equity, diversity and inclusion are considered in the development, implementation, review, and revision of all institutional policies, practices, and procedures (i.e. not only those that are explicitly equity and diversity focused)
- outline and discuss how the Institution assesses the positive and negative impact of policies, practices, and procedures on staff and students from underrepresented groups
- outline and discuss any staff consultation around equity and transparency of institutional policies, including how people from underrepresented groups are consulted

(vi) Visibility of role models

This sub-section should also:

- outline and discuss how the Institution considers gender equity and diversity at events, such as seminars or workshops; in Institution publicity materials; and in media opportunities
- summarise and discuss the diversity of speakers and chairs at events; in publicity materials; and in media opportunities
- discuss how the Institution showcases and celebrates the achievements of staff (and students, if applicable)

SECTION 5 - ACTION PLAN

There is no word limit for this section

Section 5 sets out the Institution's five-year action plan to remove or reduce the five Key Barriers to attraction, retention and progression, and thus to advance gender equity, diversity and inclusion in the organisation.

For each Key Barrier, there are likely to be a range of contributing issues. To remove the Key Barrier, a range of actions is therefore likely to be needed. Actions should be prioritised in the context of the institutional challenges, taking into account strategic alignment, likely impact, interdependency, and institutional resources.

In some cases, Institutions will find that they cannot meaningfully tackle one Key Barrier without also implementing actions associated with another barrier. In such cases, actions can be cross-referenced as contributing to multiple barriers.

In addition, through the Bronze self-assessment process, Institutions are likely to identify one or more enabling factors. For instance, there may be an identified need to improve data collection systems, or to develop a robust communication and engagement strategy to raise awareness of, and seek feedback on, institutional programs or policies. Data collection, or a communications strategy, does not directly affect the attraction, retention or progression of women and underrepresented groups, but it enables the success and evaluation of almost every action to address a barrier. Actions related to these enabling factors should also appear in the Action Plan.

The action plan should:

- be structured according to the five Key Barriers to attraction, retention and progression
- comprise actions that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART)
- include actions implemented during the self-assessment period as well as those to be implemented in the future
- include mechanisms to communicate change, to monitor the impact of actions, and to review and revise the actions as necessary
- prioritise and schedule actions across the duration of the accreditation period, with targets and milestones included
- highlight responsibility and accountability for completing actions, demonstrating that the actions are distributed across a range of staff at appropriate levels of seniority

You should use the template below to present your actions.

Reference	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person / Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
Key Barrier 1:						
Key Barrier 2:						
Key Barrier 3:						
Key Barrier 4:						
Key Barrier 5:						
Enabling factors						

Athena Swan Bronze Award
for Higher Education Institutions

Name of Institution	
Date of Application	
Contact for Application	
Email	
Telephone No.	

SECTION 1 - LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF THE INSTITUTION

SECTION 2 - THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

(i) a description of the self-assessment team

(ii) an account of the self-assessment process

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

SECTION 3 - THE INSTITUTION WORKFORCE

3.1 Staff Data

(i) Staff by employment classification type and level

(ii) Staff by contract type (continuing, fixed-term, and casual contracts)

(iii) Staff by contract function (research-only; teaching & research; teaching-only)

(iv) Staff exit data

(v) Composition of the Institution's Governing Body and Decision-making Committees

(vi) Pay Equity

3.2 Student Data

(i) Undergraduate students

(ii) Postgraduate Degree by Coursework students

(iii) Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students

SECTION 4 - WORKPLACE BARRIERS

4.1 Entry to the workforce

(i) Recruitment

(ii) Induction

(iii) Support given to PhD students for academic career progression

4.2 Developing and progressing the workforce

(i) Professional Development

(ii) Support offered when applying for research funding and demonstrating research impact

(iii) Workload

(iv) Appraisal/development review

(v) Promotion and pathways for career development

4.3 Support for career interruptions and caring responsibilities

(i) Parental leave uptake and return rate

(ii) Support and cover for parental leave: Before, during and after leave

(iii) Childcare provisions

(iv) Carer's leave, caring and cultural responsibilities, and extended personal leave

4.4 Providing a safe, equitable, and inclusive environment

(i) Institutional culture

(ii) Preventing and responding to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination

(iii) Flexible work practices

(iv) Equity and Diversity policies and procedures

(v) Equity impact assessment of all policies, practices and procedures

(vi) Visibility of role models

SECTION 5 - ACTION PLAN

Reference	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person / Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
Key Barrier 1:						
Key Barrier 2:						
Key Barrier 3:						
Key Barrier 4:						
Key Barrier 5:						
Enabling factors						