

# **Report on Athena SWAN Culture Survey**

## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

As part of the consultation process for an Athena SWAN university bronze award submission, the Self-Assessment Team (SAT) conducted a survey of all staff in March 2015 to ask about their experience and perception of workplace culture, knowledge and awareness of equality and leave policies, experience of flexible working and perceptions of leadership and management commitment to gender equality.

Overall, 964 staff members responded to the survey, representing 46% of total staff.

**Table 1. Distribution of Survey Respondents by Employment Category**

<b>Staff Category</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>% of staff category</b>
<b>Academic</b>	428	46%
<b>Research</b>	148	33%
<b>Support Services</b>	388	56%
<b>Total staff</b>	964	46% of total staff

Eighty one percent (81%) of respondents were permanent staff members, 85% full-time, 61% reported having caring responsibilities (52% male & 45% female respondents), while 3% of respondents hold a joint appointment.

**Table 2. Distribution of Survey Respondents by Gender**

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Respondents to survey</b>	653	311	964
<b>Response rate by gender %</b>	68%	32%	100%

### **1.2 Methodology**

The survey included 12 open-ended questions and 2274 qualitative responses were provided to these questions. To ensure that the analysis was objective and independent the SAT engaged an external consultant to conduct the analysis of the qualitative data. For the purposes of analysis responses to each open-ended question were divided into male and female responses and were further grouped according to the employment category identified by the respondent. The three categories used were:

1. Academic
2. Research
3. Support Services

Individual responses to open ended questions were grouped into themes using open coding. The themes were not predetermined but were identified from a careful reading of the responses and each theme was subsequently grouped into sub-categories for the purpose of providing a comprehensive summary of the responses.

For each question a commentary on the responses is provided with a short overall summary which draws together the main themes. Quotes are included to help give depth and clarity.

### **1.3 Overall Findings**

The overall findings are presented under 5 broad themes:

1. Workplace culture and management
2. Knowledge, awareness and experience of equality and leave policies and flexible working
3. Maternity and adoption leave support
4. Leadership and management commitment to gender equality
5. Career progression and support for career development.

In each area staff were asked to what extent they agreed with a number of questions and were given an opportunity to add additional comments in each section.

The number of responses provided to the open-ended questions varied across the questions. Approximately 17% of total respondents provided responses to open-ended questions.

The quantitative findings are presented throughout the report in table format. The qualitative findings provide a summary of the main issues.

## **Section 2: Survey Results and Discussion of Findings**

This section presents the survey findings under 5 headings: workplace culture and management; knowledge, awareness and experience of equality and leave policies and flexible working; maternity and adoption leave support; leadership and management commitment to gender equality; and career progression and support for career development. Each section includes an assessment of the quantitative survey results and a more in-depth examination of the open-ended responses.

### **2.1 Workplace Culture and Management: Equal Participation and Inclusivity**

Candidates were asked a number of questions about their experience and perceptions of equal participation and inclusivity.

**Table 3. Staff perceptions of Equal Participation**

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
	<b>Staff are treated equally irrespective of gender</b>		
Total	284 (31%)	154 (17%)	477 (52%)
Female	137 (22%)	118 (19%)	366 (59%)
Male	147 (50%)	36 (12%)	111 (37%)
	<b>Overall, meetings, seminars and other events are scheduled to maximise ability to attend</b>		
Total	553 (60%)	146 (16%)	216 (24%)
Female	364 (59%)	101 (16%)	156 (25%)
Male	189 (64%)	45 (15%)	60 (20%)
	<b>Part-time staff are offered the same opportunities as full-time staff</b>		
Total	215 (24%)	312 (34%)	381 (42%)
Female	135 (22%)	220 (36%)	264 (43%)
Male	80 (28%)	92 (32%)	117 (40%)
	<b>Staff with flexible work arrangements are offered the same opportunities as those who do not</b>		
Total	275 (30%)	350 (39%)	282 (31%)
Female	169 (27%)	242 (39%)	206 (33%)
Male	106 (37%)	108 (37%)	76 (26%)

Table 3 shows that just over half of respondents did not agree with the statement that staff are treated equally irrespective of gender. A greater number of female respondents indicated that they did not agree that staff are treated equally. Only a quarter (24%) of respondents reported that part-time staff are offered the same opportunities as full time staff, while almost one third did not believe that staff availing of flexible work options are offered equal opportunities. However, 60% of respondents did agree that meeting times are scheduled to maximise ability to attend.

**Table 4. Staff Perceptions of Inclusivity**

	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
	<b>The ethos of the university is one that supports equality of opportunity</b>		
Total	228 (25%)	148 (17%)	517 (58%)
Female	119 (20%)	106 (17%)	384 (63%)
Male	109 (38%)	42 (15%)	133 (47%)
	<b>Sexist language and behaviour are considered unacceptable in my workplace</b>		
Total	604 (68%)	139 (16%)	149 (17%)
Female	385 (63%)	110 (18%)	113 (19%)
Male	219 (77%)	29 (10%)	36 (13%)
	<b>Inappropriate images that stereotype men or women are not acceptable in my workplace</b>		
Total	677 (76%)	144 (16%)	68 (8%)
Female	435 (72%)	116 (19%)	55 (9%)
Male	242 (86%)	28 (10%)	13 (4%)
	<b>Social activities are welcoming to both men and women</b>		
Total	617 (70%)	161 (18%)	108 (12%)
Female	395 (65%)	126 (21%)	83 (14%)
Male	222 (79%)	35 (12%)	25 (9%)
	<b>I am confident my Head of School/Unit would appropriately manage complaints about gender harassment or bullying</b>		
Total	541 (61%)	143 (16%)	207 (23%)
Female	335 (55%)	120 (20%)	153 (25%)
Male	206 (73%)	23 (8%)	54 (19%)

From Table 4, it can be seen that the majority of respondents agreed that sexist language and behaviour are unacceptable at NUI Galway and that inappropriate images that stereotype men/women are also unacceptable. The majority of respondents also reported that social activities welcome both men and women. Slightly less than a quarter of respondents were not confident that their Head of School/Unit would manage gender harassment/bullying claims appropriately. In addition, 58% of respondents did not agree that the ethos of the university is one that supports equality of opportunity.

One hundred and fifty nine (159) respondents provided additional comments regarding equal participation and 146 comments were provided regarding workplace culture. Male and female respondents identified similar issues in relation to workplace culture and management, however, female respondents place a greater emphasis on issues relating to gender equality.

A small number of respondents, both male and female, commented positively on their experiences of working at NUI Galway, particularly in relation to the support and encouragement they received from colleagues. One respondent reported *'NUI Galway is a lovely place to work. The recent spotlight on gender issues will hopefully lead to positive change.'* (female respondent).

However, the majority of responses were critical of the workplace culture in the university. Terms used to describe the culture in NUI Galway by both male and female respondents included *'male dominated', 'misogynist', 'aggressive', 'toxic', 'bullying', 'a culture of sexism', 'cronyism', 'old boys club'*. Some respondents expressed the view that the culture had deteriorated in recent years. One respondent reported *'When I started in College I was hugely proud of the University, in the last few years I have been totally embarrassed by the goings on here.'* (female respondent).

There was a frequently expressed view that the responsibility for the negative workplace culture in NUI Galway rested with the senior management in the university. Respondents commented *'The problem in NUI Galway does not always lie in an individual's 'workplace', it lies at the heart of senior management and permeates downwards'* (male academic) and *'The ethos of an organization comes from the top and some fundamental issues regarding gender equality and understanding its complexity at this level needs be addressed.'* (female respondent).

The culture was generally regarded as not being supportive of equality of opportunity. Respondents referred to the lack of gender balance in senior management and in leadership positions, gender bias in the promotions process, and the perception that *'Gender discrimination is widespread and pervasive in the institution.'* (female respondent).

Respondents expressed the view that the workplace culture varied across Disciplines and Units and that the culture at local level was generally more supportive than that at institutional level.

A number of respondents referred to experience of harassment, bullying and offensive behaviour. Other respondents referred to instances of inappropriate language, behaviour and images. Respondents referred to instances where complaints had not been managed properly and expressed a lack of confidence that complaints would be dealt with appropriately.

## 2.2 Information, Awareness and Experience of Equality and Leave Policies and Flexible Working

Candidates were asked a range of questions about their knowledge, awareness and experience of equality and leave policies and flexible working. In addition they were asked to what extent they agreed with a number of statements in relation to leadership and management commitment to support equality related leave and flexible working requests.

**Table 5. Staff Awareness and Experience of Equality Related Leave Policies**

	Yes	No	No, but know where to find information
	<b>I am aware of equality and leave policies</b>		
Total	502 (56%)	109 (12%)	279 (31%)
Female	357 (59%)	73 (12%)	176 (29%)
Male	145 (51%)	36 (13%)	103 (36%)
	<b>I am aware of changes in legislation that may affect me in relation to equality</b>		
Total	434 (49%)	453 (51%)	n/a
Female	304 (50%)	300 (50%)	
Male	130 (46%)	153 (54%)	
	<b>I have undertaken equality and diversity training at NUI Galway</b>		
Total	68 (8%)	821 (92%)	n/a
Female	49 (8%)	556 (92%)	
Male	19 (7%)	265 (93%)	

Table 5 shows that over half of all respondents were aware of equality and leave policies. However, slightly less than half of respondents were aware of changes in equality legislation. The majority of respondents have not completed equality and diversity training.

In the qualitative responses, male and females identified similar issues in relation to their knowledge, awareness and experience of equality and leave policies and flexible working. Lack of uniformity of the implementation of equality and leave policies, and the difficulty in accessing flexible working arrangements, were of greater concern to female respondents. A number of female respondents enthused about the positive benefits that flexible working has had on their family life.

Both male and female respondents who commented on the university's equality and leave policies were generally aware and supportive of the policies. Some

respondents were critical of aspects of the wording of some policies and commented that the parental leave policy did not reflect recent changes in the legislation. There was also some criticism about the way in which policies had been communicated to staff.

There was some lack of awareness of the university's equality and diversity training, particularly among research and support services members of staff. There was also a degree of criticism of the adequacy of the training.

Some respondents were concerned that the policies were not implemented uniformly across the university, and some respondents reported difficulty in gaining approval for flexible working arrangements.

Concern was expressed by some male and female respondents that members of staff who avail of flexibility to accommodate family / caring responsibilities were perceived to be less committed to their careers. Concern was also expressed about the impact that inconsiderate timing of meetings, committees, events etc., had on those with family / caring responsibilities and on work-life balance. One respondent commented *'It is a lot easier for me as a man to require that meetings and teaching start after 9.30 due to my childcare commitments'* (male respondent).

Some male members of staff commented that there was a need for greater awareness that many men share childcare commitments with their partners.

The respondents who commented on part-time and flexible working arrangements indicated that support for flexible working arrangements was not consistent across the University and depended on the discretion of individual managers.

Concern was expressed that, if a member of staff avails of flexibility, the workload is not adjusted accordingly, and that there is an implicit expectation that those working part-time will work in excess of their contracted hours. One respondent reported a reluctance to apply for flexible working arrangements because she was concerned that this might damage her career prospects.

Concern was also expressed by some male and female respondents at the impact of flexible arrangements on colleagues and on the provision of services, particularly in view of resource constraints.

Some respondents expressed the view that staff working part-time were not always able to avail of career development and training opportunities which tend to be arranged based on a full-time working norm. Some of the support services members of staff highlighted the difficulty in accessing flexible working arrangements for members of staff working in areas which require an *'open 9-5 policy'*.

Concern was expressed by a number of male and female respondents about recent changes to the crèche provision at NUI Galway, including lack of consultation with parents, increase in fees, a reduction in the flexibility of the service, and the impact the changes have on family life. One respondent reported in relation to reduced flexibility of the service, *'...if you wish your child to attend mornings only, there must be another parent with a child who will attend afternoons in order to 'make up' one full time place.'* (male respondent).



### 2.3 Maternity and Adoption Leave Support

Staff were asked a number of questions related to maternity leave including their awareness of maternity or adoption leave entitlement and pay arrangements, and their experience of adjustments to working arrangements during pregnancy and on return to work following maternity leave.

**Table 6. Maternity and adoption leave support**

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
	<b>Have you been on maternity leave or adoption leave in the last three years?</b>			
<b>Female</b>	92 (15%)	422 (70%)	91 (15%)	605 (100%)
	<b>On return from maternity leave, was any special arrangement put in place to facilitate your re-engagement with research and/or professional activities?</b>			
<b>Female</b>	5 (5%)	78 (85%)	9 (10%)	92 (100%)

Table 6 shows that 92 female respondents availed of maternity leave during the three year period 2012 to 2014 and that 78 of those women who availed of maternity leave reported that no special arrangement was put in place to facilitate re-engagement with research and/or other professional activities on return from maternity leave.

A number of respondents commented on issues related to maternity leave support but there were no comments or suggestions provided in respect of adoption leave.

The following comment was provided by a male academic member of staff in relation to maternity leave: *'If the University is serious about tackling its systemic discrimination against women then it needs to look at how maternity impacts research. My experience is that the impact goes far beyond the 6 months of leave. Turning off the research pipeline, returning to a full teaching load with additional care responsibilities - all of these need to be acknowledged in the support arrangements and in promotion criteria.'* (male respondent).

Comments provided by female respondents regarding maternity leave support related to: the impact of maternity leave on research activity and the difficulty in playing catch up when returning to a full teaching, administration and research schedule; lack of clarity of how periods of maternity leave are taken into account with regards to promotion and performance management and the impact that this can have on career progression; pressure to work while on maternity leave; lack of management support; lack of appropriate and convenient facilities to accommodate expressing and storage of breast milk; and lack of adequate and timely maternity leave cover.

In relation to the impact of maternity leave on career progression one respondent made the following comment: *'I don't have children yet but I am afraid that my career prospectus [sic] would be reduced when I have'* (female respondent). A number of

female academic respondents reported that no special arrangements had been put in place to facilitate their re-engagement with research and/or other professional activities on return from maternity leave. One respondent described having been ‘...*thrown straight back in, with no support.*’ and reported that, not only had she returned to a full work schedule but she had to prepare work prior to returning from maternity leave.

A male member of staff suggested that the University should consider paternal leave.

Respondents provided a range of suggestions to improve support regarding maternity leave which would be equally applicable to adoption leave.

## 2.4 Leadership and Management Commitment to Gender Equality

Staff members were asked a range of questions in relation to leadership and management commitment to gender equality.

**Table 7. Staff Perceptions of Leadership and Management Commitment to Gender Equality**

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
	<b>Women and men are equally visible in leadership roles in my workplace</b>		
Total	213 (25%)	74 (8%)	577 (67%)
Female	115 (20%)	47 (8%)	425 (72%)
Male	98 (35%)	27 (10%)	152 (55%)
	<b>Managers in my workplace understand the need to engage with issues relating to gender equality</b>		
Total	306 (36%)	220 (25%)	335 (39%)
Female	169 (29%)	156 (27%)	260 (44%)
Male	137 (50%)	64 (23%)	75 (27%)
	<b>I think positive action is required to promote gender equality</b>		
Total	624 (73%)	133 (15%)	100 (12%)
Female	456 (79%)	87 (15%)	38 (6%)
Male	168 (61%)	46 (17%)	62 (22%)
	<b>My university takes positive action to encourage women to apply for posts in areas where they are under-represented</b>		
Total	96 (11%)	296 (35%)	468 (55%)

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Female	42 (7%)	178 (31%)	364 (62%)
Male	54 (20%)	118 (43%)	104 (38%)
	<b>Overall, from a gender equality point of view, I think that this is a good place to work</b>		
Total	222 (26%)	198 (23%)	442 (51%)
Female	119 (20%)	139 (24%)	327 (56%)
Male	103 (37%)	59 (21%)	115 (42%)

Table 7 shows that only a quarter of respondents reported that men and women are equally visible in leadership roles. Almost three quarters of respondents agreed that positive action was required to promote gender equality. However, only 11% of respondents agreed that the university currently takes such action to encourage women to apply for posts in areas where they are under-represented. Furthermore, only 26% of respondents agree that NUI Galway is a good place to work, from a gender equality point of view. Table 7 also shows that almost the almost as many respondents both agreed and disagreed with the statement that 'Managers in my workplace understand the need to engage with issues relating to gender equality'.

One hundred and fifty three (153) respondents provided additional comments on this section. Male and female respondents identified similar issues in relation to leadership and management commitment to gender equality. However female respondents commented to a greater extent on the lack of promotion opportunities for women, gender discrimination in the promotions process, particularly at Senior Lecturer level, and the lack of understanding and commitment of senior management to gender equality.

Male and female respondents who commented on the leadership and management commitment to gender equality at NUI Galway were generally critical. Respondents expressed discontent at the reputation and the record of the University in relation to gender equality and were critical of the role of senior management, making reference to a lack of understanding of the real issues, a lack of commitment to change, and the decision by the University to appeal the outcome of the Equality Tribunal. Some respondents reported that staff morale has deteriorated as a consequence of the adverse publicity regarding gender equality in NUI Galway.

A respondent expressed the view that there was a perception of gender equality as a '*...woman's problem...*' (female respondent) and another respondent commented that '*...the issue is not "fixing the women" the issue is fixing a failed system - and NUI Galway represents a failed system.*' (female respondent).

Some male and female respondents also expressed a lack of confidence in the ability of senior management to bring about meaningful change.

Several respondents expressed the view that achieving gender equality was hindered by the male dominated culture in NUI Galway, referring to the lack of females in senior management and leadership positions, the consequent lack of women to act as mentors and role models, and gender bias in the promotion process, particularly promotion to Senior Lecturer.

There were mixed views expressed on positive action measures with the majority of the comments, from both male and female respondents, expressing opposition to the use of positive action. It was evident from some of the comments that a number of the respondents were not clear about what constituted positive action. One respondent commented that in relation to the survey questions *'...the definition of positive action is unclear and hence the questions associated cannot be answered...'* (male respondent).

Views expressed by respondents who opposed the use of positive action included:

*'There is a great danger with positive action if it is limited only to one gender, which at the moment seems to be the intent at NUI Galway, as it encourages resentment in a proportion of the members of the other gender.'* (female respondent), and

*'This university has a terrible record on gender equality when it comes to promotions. And yet I strongly disagree with "positive action" as a solution to this. Why? Because "positive action" is a flag of convenience that the university can wave to show that they are "doing something" about tackling inequality. But it will not solve anything in terms of promotion outcomes...'* (male respondent).

A small number of male respondents expressed the view that male members of staff suffered discrimination in NUI Galway. One respondent expressed the view that as a result of *'...the way management are striving to balance gender - the male staff are now being discriminated against, in an effort to create artificial balance.'* (male respondent).

A small number of respondents expressed concern that the Athena SWAN survey related only to gender equality. Some respondents suggested that the survey should be broadened to address other equality dimensions including age, disability, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. One respondent also commented that consideration should be given to the Irish language requirement and its impact on the *"new Irish"* people.

A number of respondents were critical of the lack of transparency around the appointment of members of the Athena SWAN group and the Gender Equality Task Force. There were a number of positive comments about the establishment of the Athena SWAN initiative and the Gender Equality Task Force and expressions of hope that the initiatives would lead to a culture of greater transparency, openness and engagement. However there was a degree of scepticism expressed about the prospects of positive change with some respondents referring to lack of action arising from some previous surveys and initiatives.

One respondent reported that *'NUI Galway has the opportunity to lead and provide excellent leadership and guidance in gender equality. Given the many achievements of the University historically and in recent years, it would be unfortunate if the*

*opportunity to make a difference is lost - it will be a tough road as there is a lot to be done to make the changes that will be essential.'* (female respondent).

## 2.5 Career Progression and Support for Career Development

Staff were asked a number of open-ended questions in this section. Three hundred and sixty two (362) provided a response to a question asking what the university could do to support individuals in their careers. Four hundred and six (406) staff members suggested factors both organisational and personal that they think hindered them in their career.

**Table 8. Staff Perceptions of Career Progression and Support for Career Development**

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
	<b>I am encouraged to take up career development opportunities</b>		
Total	375 (44%)	177 (20%)	307 (36%)
Female	232 (40%)	118 (20%)	233 (40%)
Male	143 (52%)	59 (21%)	74 (27%)
	<b>I am aware of the range of training and development opportunities available within the university</b>		
Total	623 (73%)	108 (12%)	125 (15%)
Female	420 (72%)	71 (12%)	90 (16%)
Male	203 (74%)	37 (13%)	35 (13%)
	<b>I think my workload is fair compared to my peers</b>		
Total	366 (43%)	173 (20%)	321 (37%)
Female	244 (42%)	127 (22%)	213 (36%)
Male	122 (44%)	46(17%)	108 (39%)
	<b>I am encouraged to become involved in external activities such as conferences, workshops, meetings</b>		
Total	427 (52%)	186 (22%)	213 (26%)
Female	262 (47%)	139 (25%)	158 (28%)
Male	165 (62%)	47 (18%)	55 (21%)
	<b>Men and women are given equal opportunities to become involved in internal activities</b>		
Total	431 (52%)	178 (22%)	214 (26%)

Female	249 (45%)	142 (26%)	166 (30%)
Male	182 (68%)	36 (14%)	48 (18%)

Table 8 shows that almost three quarters of respondents agreed that they were aware of training and development opportunities in the university, whereas less than half agreed that they were encouraged to avail of career development opportunities. Over half of respondents agreed that they are encouraged to be involved at external activities and that both men and women are given equal opportunities to be involved in internal activities. A total of 43% of respondents agreed that their workload was fair in comparison with their peers while 37% disagreed with the same statement.

There were 191 additional comments provided regarding support and encouragement for career development and progression.

Male and female respondents, in the main, identified similar issues in relation to career progression and support for career development. The impact of family and caring responsibilities on career progression was emphasised to a greater extent by female respondents. The view that a lack of balance in the distribution between teaching / administration and research activities was gender related was expressed by female respondents only.

A major issue identified by members of staff across all categories, which impacted on career development and career progression, related to increasing and excessive workloads and the unequal distribution of workloads. A number of academic members of staff reported a lack of appropriate balance between teaching / administration and research activities and that this had a negative impact on promotion prospects as research activity is given a higher weighting in the promotions process than teaching. Some female respondents expressed the view that on occasions the lack of balance was gender related as there was a tendency for females to be allocated a disproportionate amount of administrative and teaching duties, allowing males more time for research, which ultimately impacts on promotion opportunities.

Some criticism was expressed by academic members of staff in relation to the application of the workload management model including: concern at a lack of transparency; a perception that the model can appear to be fair while subject to manipulation; and the fact that the model placed equal weight on teaching, administration/community and research, while promotion criteria gives much greater weighting to research than the other workload components.

Some respondents reported that it was difficult to avail of career development opportunities due to excessive workloads.

Respondents reported that the support for career development was not consistent across the university. A number of female respondents expressed concern that opportunities to participate on committees, senior leadership roles and activities which could benefit career progression appear to be allocated on a '*...grace and favour basis...*' with a lack of transparency which adversely impacts on females.

Several respondents commented on a lack of access to opportunities for career development and a lack of appropriate training opportunities. Research and support services members of staff were particularly concerned at the absence of a career path and commented that, while there are training opportunities available, these had little impact on career progression.

Members of staff across all categories expressed concern at the lack of opportunities for career progression and promotion. Research members of staff were particularly concerned at the lack of job security and the absence of any career progression opportunities for members of staff on non-permanent contracts.

There were a number of criticisms made by both male and female academic members of staff in relation to the promotions process including: a lack of clearly defined promotion criteria; a lack of transparency around the promotion process, particularly in relation to promotion to Personal Professor; and the restrictions on the number of promoted posts available, particularly at Senior Lecturer level. One respondent suggested that '*... The quota for SL promotions should be abolished, it is, at the end of the day, in place for financial reasons and the HEA and Government should be required to provide funds for promotions even for the next 3-5 years to redress the gender imbalance across the sector. Our University should be an outspoken proponent of such measures.*' (female respondent).

Some respondents also expressed concern that excellence in teaching was not properly recognised in the promotions process.

Family and caring responsibilities and the need to balance work and family life was identified as one of the factors which can hinder career progression. Respondents referred to the impact of the '*long hours culture*' at NUI Galway on family life, the difficulty for members of staff with caring responsibilities to engage in the full range of networking and other career development opportunities, and the perception that members of staff who avail of flexible working to accommodate caring responsibilities are less committed to their work and to the university.

A number of respondents reported that their careers were hindered by a failure of managers at Head of Department level, and at university level, who failed to provide effective leadership or to support or encourage staff in their career development. Several respondents were very positive about the support and encouragement which they received from colleagues and from some '*immediate managers*'.

Respondents expressed mixed views on the operation of the Personal Management Development System (PMDS). Several respondents commented positively on the introduction of PMDS and on their own experience of the system. Some respondents were critical of the operation of PMDS, commenting that the implementation was not uniform across the university, that staff development opportunities identified through PMDS did not materialise, that the system was little more than a 'tick-box' system, and that some members of staff had been prevented from availing of training opportunities because their PMDS had not been completed.

Staff were given an opportunity to put forward suggestions as to what their workplace could do to support them in their careers. A comprehensive range of suggestions were made by 362 members of staff (103 men and 259 women).

The majority of the suggestions made by male academic members of staff related to resource constraints, workload, promotion prospects and recognition for contribution and achievements. Female academic members of staff made suggestions related to equality of opportunity, mentoring, workload, resource constraints, promotion prospects and recognition for contribution and achievements.

Research staff members indicated concern at the lack of stability and the absence of a career path for research staff. Support Services staff also expressed concern at the lack of career progression.

A detailed list of the suggestions by staff category and gender are included in Appendix 1 for information. This list will be used to inform future actions for the Athena SWAN action plan.

### ***Section 3: Final Comments Regarding Workplace Culture at NUI Galway***

The final question in the Athena SWAN Gender Equality Survey afforded respondents the opportunity to provide any further comments regarding the workplace culture at NUI Galway.

The nature of the culture in NUI Galway was the major theme which was commented on by male members of staff across all staff categories, and the nature of the culture in NUI Galway and gender equality issues were the 2 major themes which were commented on by female members of staff across all staff categories.

A number of both male and female members of staff, across the staff categories, described working in the university as a very positive / positive experience, particularly within their immediate environments. However, the majority of the comments relating to the culture at NUI Galway were critical, with some comments suggesting a deterioration in the culture in recent years.

Comments provided by female members of staff, across the staff categories, in relation to gender equality included references to a lack of gender balance in senior management and leadership positions, and gender bias in the promotions process.

The majority of comments made by both male and female members of staff with respect to gender equality in NUI Galway related, in the main, to bias against females. However, a few comments made by male members of staff reflected the view that there was a lack of gender equality for males in NUI Galway and a female member of staff commented that, in the process to address gender inequalities, care needed to be taken to ensure that men were not discriminated against.



## ***Section 4: Conclusion***

The Athena SWAN SAT is very grateful to all staff who participated in this survey. This report represents the first consultation with all staff as part of the University's engagement with the Athena SWAN charter.

The SAT has noted that there is consistency across both data sets and that the qualitative responses compliment the quantitative data. The responses and suggestions contained therein will help the SAT identify future actions, monitor progress, and provide an opportunity for continued engagement with staff.

# Appendix 1

Staff were given an opportunity to put forward suggestions as to what their workplace could do to support them in their careers. A comprehensive range of suggestions were made by members of staff (103 men and 259 women) as to how the university could support them in their careers.

The majority of the suggestions made by male academic members of staff related to resource constraints, workload, promotion prospects and recognition for contribution and achievements.

Actions, identified by male academic members of staff, that could be taken to support staff in their careers included:

- Provide more administrative support to reduce administrative burden for academic staff thus allowing more time for research and other activities
- Increase funding for research, attendance at conferences and travel
- Increase staffing levels and reduce workloads
- Provide '*starting grants*' for newly appointed members of staff
- Allocate adequate time for research activities
- Greater transparency in teaching loads
- Greater recognition for teaching activities in the promotion process to senior lecturer
- Publish clearly defined promotion criteria and provide greater transparency around the promotion process
- Establish a merit based promotion process whereby all applicants meeting the pre-determined criteria are successfully promoted
- Better and more consistent management of the PMDS
- Provide a formal mentoring system particularly for early career members of staff
- Greater acknowledgement and recognition of individuals' contributions and achievements
- Acknowledge research carried out by members of staff not in Research Institutes
- Greater inter-departmental scrutiny of internal procedures
- Greater use of external peer review
- Provide paid study leave / sabbatical leave for University Teachers
- Review the use of short term contracts
- Greater access to flexible working arrangements
- Ability to share maternity leave between both partners
- Commit to an equality audit of all policies and their implementation
- Ensure transparency of procedures and provide equality of opportunity

Female academic members of staff made suggestions related to equality of opportunity, mentoring, workload, resource constraints, promotion prospects and recognition for contribution and achievements.

Actions, identified by female academic members of staff, that could be taken to support staff in their careers included:

- Proactively promote equality of opportunity and ensure that men and women are treated equally
- Ensure equality of opportunity in the promotion process to ensure there is no gender bias
- Ensure female academic staff are not disproportionately allocated activities that do not contribute to career development and to promotion prospects
- Ensure equal pay between men and women
- Increase female representation, particularly at senior level and in leadership positions, to ensure gender balance
- Provide unconscious bias training for senior staff and for all those involved in the recruitment and promotion processes
- Recognise the impact of maternity leave on careers and provide support for women returning from maternity leave, for example, by reducing or removing teaching load for a period of time to focus on research
- Provide more support for working parents and promote a healthy work life balance for all members of staff
- Provide more affordable and accessible crèche facilities to include afterhours childcare on campus
- Ensure that University conferences and events etc. include both male and female speakers
- Provide more administrative support to reduce administrative burden for academic staff thus allowing more time for research and other activities
- Increase staffing levels and reduce workloads
- Ensure a more equitable distribution of workloads and greater clarity and transparency of workload expectations
- Ensure appropriate balance in workload between teaching and research and value both equally
- Provide more opportunities for team teaching or shared teaching
- Reduce the teaching allocation for early career staff to allow them to develop their research portfolio
- Increase funding for research, attendance at conferences and travel
- Provide funds to cover additional childcare expenses when presenting research at international conferences
- Ensure that expectation for part-time members of staff are commensurate with their contract hours and that this is taken into account in the PMDS and the promotions process
- Provide a reduction in workload or sabbatical leave to facilitate completion of PhD
- Provide training, career and personal development opportunities, including management and leadership training, and ensure staff have time to engage

- Provide regular discipline-specific workshops on research publication
- Publish clearly defined promotion criteria and provide greater transparency around the promotion process
- Establish a merit based promotion process whereby all applicants meeting the pre-determined criteria are successfully promoted
- Better and more consistent management of the PMDS
- Ensure that support / training identified through PMDS is provided
- Introduce PMDS for members of staff on non-permanent contracts
- Deal appropriately with under-performing members of staff
- Provide a mentoring system which also supports career development, management and leadership aspirations
- Provide access to external mentoring and coaching
- Ensure a greater involvement of female members of staff in strategic and decision making committees, working groups and other bodies and reduce the over reliance on a small number of high profile female members of staff
- Greater acknowledgement and recognition of individual contributions and achievements
- Ensure University Teachers have parity of esteem with their academic colleagues
- Greater access to and genuine acceptance of flexible working arrangements
- Provide additional support for new PIs, for example, a PhD student or contract technician to kick start research
- Review the use of non-permanent contracts and provide greater stability to members of staff on non-permanent contracts
- Improve communication of information in relation to areas such as courses, sources of funding, conferences and in-house training, particularly for newly appointed members of staff

Research staff members indicated concern at the lack of stability and the absence of a career path for research staff.

Actions, identified by male research members of staff, that could be taken to support staff in their careers included:

- The development of a strategy that allows for a structured career path for researchers rather than '*...a contract to contract system...*'
- Actively promote the development of teaching for research staff interested in obtaining a lecturing post
- Provide a formal mechanism for researchers to publish their research to allow them to build a personal reputation
- More staff development courses to meet the needs of research staff
- Establishment of an '*opt out*' mentoring scheme for all research staff
- A more proactive approach to the integration of new staff

Other suggestions included:

- Return a percentage of overheads to the PIs who generate the OHs in the first place. In projects with multi-disciplinary teams, ensure that OH are distributed to junior staff on a pro-rata basis.
- Support in tracking CPD. Online presence through IRIS is useful, but also difficult to maintain - it would be great if this were linked to other research platforms to keep publications and other work up to date (e.g. ResearchGate, LinkedIn, Mendeley)
- More transparency on rights regarding pay, holidays, furthering career opportunities.
- Provide more of a 'voice' at departmental staff meetings for research based employees.

Actions, identified by female research members of staff, that could be taken to support staff in their careers included:

- Establish clearly defined career paths including opportunities to progress to academia or progress within research
- Introduce a performance appraisal system for research staff
- Actively promote the development of teaching for research staff interested in obtaining a lecturing post
- Provide a formal mechanism for researchers to publish their research to allow them to build a personal reputation
- Establish a mentoring system, 1 respondent suggested a formal scheme and 1 suggested that the mentor should be someone outside of their Unit
- More staff training and development courses to meet the needs of research staff, including: grant writing techniques; scientific writing; oral presentation; project management; people management; and leadership
- Provide opportunities for CID researchers to participate in work groups and committees
- Provide conference funding and/or travel grants for early career researchers
- Establish a fund to assist researchers with funding for research costs in the event that funding is only secured to cover the cost of a salary.

Other suggestions / comments included:

- Consider schemes to encourage/provide return-to-work opportunities, with potential for career enhancement for highly-qualified graduates who take time out for child rearing. Explore the attitudes of females who have remained to other females who have taken time out for child-rearing activities - there are some signs that female-to-female discrimination may exist
- All posts should be competitively filled and not based on personal relationships, regardless of how minor they are considered, as this can give rise to potential 'gender' inequality and inequality in general
- Greater allocation of time to actual research rather than other activities
- Treat researchers with equal respect to lecturers
- Provide discounted rates for on-site crèche

- Establish proper management system to prevent misogyny and racial discrimination
- Development of more stringent anti bullying procedures.

Support Services staff also expressed concern at the lack of career progression for support staff.

Actions, identified by male support services members of staff, that could be taken to support staff in their careers included:

- Develop a career progression policy and promotion opportunities for all categories of support staff
- Establish defined career paths
- Better use of performance appraisal
- Incremental progression linked to performance
- Establish a formal mentoring programme
- More training targeted to specific needs of the different categories of staff
- Greater personal engagement of line managers in the career development of staff
- Provide opportunities for staff to work in other areas
- Remove barriers to working across academic and support areas
- Recognise achievement / performance and reward financially
- Reduce excessive workloads
- Consider work life balance
- Support attendance at relevant conferences as part of personal / career development.

Actions, identified by female support services members of staff, that could be taken to support staff in their careers included:

- Develop a career progression policy and promotion opportunities for all categories of support staff
- Establish defined career paths
- Greater emphasis on providing and supporting career development opportunities
- Enable cross over between academic, administrative, technical and library categories
- Provide job rotation opportunities
- Provide opportunities for staff to work or work shadow in other areas of the University
- Provide opportunities to work in other public sector bodies for a period of time
- Greater use of succession planning
- Provide opportunities to network in NUIG and to join professional networks
- More training opportunities and more training targeted to specific needs of the different categories of staff
- Continue to provide courses on management development and leadership
- Allow time for professional development during working hours

- Provide financial support for relevant courses that may not be available within NUIG
- Provide financial support for Masters courses
- Provide greater support and training for staff returning from career breaks
- Facilitate internal promotion rather than recruiting externally
- Establish appropriate formal mentoring systems
- Ensure that all staff have regular performance appraisals and that training needs identified during the PMDS process are provided
- Provide opportunities to be involved in project based work, working groups, committees, engagement activities and events
- Provide induction days for new staff
- Allow greater flexibility to accommodate work life balance and caring responsibilities including flexible working hours, work from home policy, more part-time and job-share opportunities
- Hold meetings at times that allow all participants to attend
- Reduce excessive workloads and provide adequate resources
- Greater number of female senior managers
- Recognise and value achievement and contributions and reward financially
- Facilitate site visits to other institutions to benchmark and learn
- Fully utilise the re-deployment policy.

Other comments included:

- Provide more information on roles and activities within NUIG
- Consider a more proactive approach between the HR Office and university staff, *'a face to face approach would be helpful.'*
- *'I think there is a tendency to perceive women who have not engaged too much in climbing the corporate ladder due to family/childcare commitments in their early working years as women without ambition which is not the case.'*
- Review structure and take a serious look at outsourcing
- Provide a working repair area for pc's in Engineering building.