

**Athena Swan
Action Plan**

# Future action plan

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| **Key priority 1: Create a safe and inclusive culture promoting gender equality and a ‘One Law School’ ethos**  |
| **Ref** | **Action** | **Rationale** | **Timescale** | **Responsibility** | **Milestones** | **Success Indicators** |
| 1.1 | Engage City's Organisational Development to undertake work to unpack the cultural issues that staff want to see addressed, putting place remedial actions to address those concerns, and monitoring progress through staff survey data. | In the January 2022 staff survey (appendix 1), some 60% of women academic staff who responded were not satisfied with how bullying and harassment are addressed in CLS (City Law School) (with just over 20% expressing this feeling strongly); moreover, none agreed/strongly agreed that they were satisfied. We need to give staff an opportunity to express their concerns and to suggest preferred solutions in an environment where they feel safe | 1. Report by September 2023 2. Required changes implemented by January 2024 | COO and Dean | 1. Internal or external consultants engaged (March 2023).2. Research carried out (April-May 2023).3. Report considered by SLT (Senior Leadership Team) (September 2023)4. Results and proposals published to staff (October 2023)5. Implementation of proposals (by January 2024) 6. Further review of actions and their effectiveness both generally and on a gendered basis (annual, to 2027) | 1.Implementation of any required remedial action2. Significant reduction in level of concerns, e.g., about bullying and harassment, in staff surveys, to achieve an ongoing further reduction of at least 5% per year (from a baseline of 32.7% of staff in 2022) with a target of no more than 5% by 2027 |
| 1.2 | Conduct equality impact assessment of implementation of City’s flexible working policy in CLS and take any necessary remedial action  | In the January 2022 staff survey, approximately 30% of women academic staff who responded did not feel that CLS enabled flexible working (with over 20% expressing this feeling strongly. We need a better understanding of what remedial action is required in the implementation of flexible working at CLS, particularly in light of post-Covid hybrid working arrangements.  | 1. Equality impact assessment completed by July 2023 2. Required changes implemented by September 2023 | COO and Dean | 1. Equality impact assessment carried out (March-May 2023)2. Results considered by CLS SLT (June 2023)3. Results and proposals published to staff (July 2023)4. Implementation of any required remedial action (by September 2023)5. Further review of actions and effect (annual, to at least 2026) | 1. Implementation of any required remedial action 2. Improved level of satisfaction in staff surveys, especially from women and caregivers, with reductions of at least 10% (from a baseline of 34.6% of women staff in 2022) expressing dissatisfaction at CLS flexible working arrangements each year with a view to ongoing further reduction to a target of 5% by 2027 |
| 1.3 | Establish a cross-CLS Working Environment Staff Group to propose initiatives to improve the working environment, to monitor the implementation of changes, and to evaluate the success of those changes through survey data | Taking account of the results of staff survey data from surveys carried out over the past 3 years (noting the responses from women academic staff) and also informal feedback from staff, the CLS SLT is conscious of the need to do more to enhance a sense of community and of shared values within CLS and to enhance gender equality. There is very little by way of shared working between the two departments (and little understanding in each department of what staff in the other department do) and there have been instances where academic staff have shown a lack of understanding of what is done by professional and support staff. The SLT feel that cultural change is key to improving the experience of all staff at CLS | September 2024 | COO and Dean | 1. Group established (September 2023)2. Group makes proposals for improvements to the working environment (January 2024)3. SLT considers proposals (February 2024)4. Actions implemented by September 2024 | Increase level of positive feedback in staff surveys on the feeling of community and perceptions of gender equality with incremental improvement of at least 5% per year (from a baseline of 20% in 2022) and with no more than 10% of respondents expressing feelings that their contribution to CLS is not valued |
| 1.4 | Design and launch practical workshops to facilitate and support the promotion application process of academic staff | In the 2019 staff survey 33% of staff did not feel supported in applying for promotion. In the January 2022 survey, 48% of female academic staff who responded felt that their career development was not supported (24% feeling this strongly), 17% of male academic staff felt unsupported (13% feeling this strongly). Part of the strategy for addressing this includes encouragement of teamwork and designing activities geared towards women career advancement  | 1. Design and Recruitment for the workshops September 20232. EvaluationJuly 2025 | Associate Dean (EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)) and HR Manager | 1. Design and Recruitment for the workshops (September 2023)2. Promotion workshops to run prior to the promotion application cycle (January-February 2024)3. Effectiveness evaluated by a survey (July 2025)  | 1. Outputs from teamwork appear in promotion applications2. Staff survey results show an annual reduction in dissatisfaction expressed by female academic staff regarding support in career development of at least 5% (from the baseline of 44% of women staff in 2022), with no more than 15% expressing dissatisfaction by 2027 |
| 1.5 | Monitor uptake of targeted training, in particular active bystander training and having difficult conversations, and use targeted line management conversations to encourage and facilitate increased uptake, to achieve an increase in participation in training. | As noted under action 1.1, the staff survey data shows a perception of bullying and harassment that calls for a variety of interventions aimed at improving the CLS culture around bullying and harassment; helping staff to understand what does (and does not) constitute bullying and harassment; empowering staff so that they feel able to “call out” poor behaviour; and reassuring staff that reports of poor behaviour will be acted upon in an appropriate way | Annual up to July 2027 | Associate Dean (EDI) | 1. Take-up of training opportunities monitored and reported to EDI Committee annually2. Appraisal records (reviewed annually) confirm discussion of training opportunities with line manager (from 2023-24 academic year) | Significant reduction in level of concern about bullying and harassment in staff surveys and an increase in confidence that appropriate actions will be taken), with an increase of at least 10% each year (from the baseline of 40% of women academics) in confidence that appropriate action will be taken, with a view to achieving 90% confidence by 2027. |
| **Key priority 2: Implementing a workload allocation model for a more transparent and fairer distribution of duties among staff**  |
| **Ref** | **Action** | **Rationale** | **Timescale** | **Responsibility** | **Milestones** | **Success Indicators** |
| 2.1 | Develop a Workload Allocation Model that is: (i) transparent, (ii) accurately captures entire workload of academic staff, (iii) enables fair distribution of duties among staff, (iv) ensures ‘service’ is considered, and(v) makes provision for participation in activities and projects that are relevant to career development and progression | In the 2020 Staff Survey, few staff (18%) thought that the way workload was allocated in CLS was transparent. Only 20% thought that workload was allocated fairly. This calls for a careful analysis of workload allocation to ensure that it is in fact fair and can be shown to be such. The fact that there is a perception of unfairness shows a need to increase the transparency of the workload allocation process; in particular, addressing the criticism that the current allocation process captures only some parts of the academic role; and ensuring that activities relevant to progression are overtly valued and facilitated | 1. Consultation April 20232. Workload Allocation Model (pilot 2023-24) published June 20233. Model revised and extended (July 2025)3. New model in use across CLS from August 2025 | Heads of Department and Deputy Dean | 1. Workload Allocation Model pilot published (May 2023)2. Cross-CLS version published (July 2025) | Improved staff feedback (e.g., in staff survey) on transparency and fairness of workload allocation for academic staff as measured by confidence that leadership supports gender equality (from a baseline of 45% in 2022), especially women, with annual improvement in satisfaction of at least 10%, with at least 70% of respondents saying they regard the allocation as fair and transparent by 2027 |
| 2.2 | Create and maintain a single CLS staff information portal, to include all information about staffing-related matters, including workload allocation, timetabling policy, sabbatical policy, and career development opportunities | As is noted in section 1.4 of the application, information has not always been readily available to staff, requiring steps to increase transparency and to make relevant information readily accessible to all staff | 1. Portal launched October 20222. Feedback sought from staff June 2023 | COO | 1. Portal created, and relevant documents uploaded (October 2022)2. Specific role-holder given responsibility of ensuring the information is kept up to date (October 2022)3. Regular reminders sent out about the existence of this portal (from October 2022)4. Effectiveness evaluated by a staff survey (June 2023) | Establish benchmark information for visibility of staff policy and at least 80% of respondents confirm in the feedback sought that the portal contains the staffing-related information that they need and is readily accessible  |
| **Key priority 3: Developing and prioritising gender equality initiatives that empower staff and support their career progression**  |
| **Ref** | **Action** | **Rationale** | **Timescale** | **Responsibility** | **Milestones** | **Success Indicators** |
| 3.1 | Ensure that appraisals take place in accordance with City requirements and that, through appropriate training of appraisers, appraisals include advice on career progression; monitor number of women appraised against successful promotion applications. | The results of the 2020 Staff Survey showed that only just over one-third of staff agreed that the appraisal process supported their professional development. In 2021/2, despite the introduction of a new appraisal platform and training, confidence in appraisal remained low. Steps are needed to increase uptake of opportunities for advice on career progression; encouraging uptake of career development opportunities; ensuring that appraisal discussions with women include known factors in women not putting themselves forward for promotion.In the January 2022 survey, over 40% of women academics who responded did not feel that their manager supported their career development, with nearly 25% feeling this strongly. This calls for steps to encourage more women to apply for promotion and to succeed in their applications; in particular to achieve higher and female representation in the CLS professoriate and associate professoriate in both Research and Education and Education role profiles | 1. Review of appraisal uptake and quality July 2024 2. Evaluation December 2025 | Heads of Department, COO and HR Manager | 1. Additional training made available to appraisers and appraisees (from September 2023)2. Review of uptake of appraisal and correlation with promotion application outcomes for men and women on the academic programme (annual, from July 2023)4. Evaluation of CLS implementation of appraisal scheme (December 2025) | 1. At least 70% of staff of all genders have completed annual appraisal by academic year 2023-24 (from a baseline 0% in 2019/20)2. In staff surveys, at least 80% of respondents of all genders indicate satisfaction with the effectiveness of appraisal at CLS by 2025 (from a baseline of 33% in 2020)3. Monitor women promotion rates after the implementation of the robust appraisal process to establish baseline data. An increase of 10% per year of women’s promotion rates (from a baseline of 0% in 2021) until reaching parity with men at every grade |
| 3.2 | Establish a formal post-probation mentoring scheme for academic and professional services staff; monitor take-up of mentoring; and seek feedback on its effectiveness | As noted under action 3.1, many staff do not feel supported in their career development and so steps are required to help staff, particularly female academic staff, to feel more supported in their career development | 1. Mentoring scheme established September 20232. Evaluation December 2025 | Associate Dean (EDI) | 1. Formal mentoring scheme established and publicised (September 2023)2. Mentors trained (November 2023)3. Take-up monitored on basis of gender (annual, from December 2023)4. Scheme evaluated (December 2025) | 1. In staff surveys, at least 80% of respondents express satisfaction with effectiveness of mentoring in supporting career development by 2026 (from a baseline of 17.3% in 2022) |
| 3.3 | Increase opportunities for promotion of professional services staff via job shadowing and mentoring | In the January 2022 survey, just over 10% of male professional service staff who responded felt strongly that their manager did not support their career development (0% for women). Whilst at City there is no promotion process as such for professional and support staff, there are opportunities for career advancement by taking on a role at a higher grade when there is a vacancy, and we wish to enhance career development opportunities for professional service staff | 1.Opportunities published as and when they become available2. Uptake reviewed annually, from June 2023 | COO | 1. Publication of information to staff about career development opportunities then they become available2. Monitoring of take up of opportunities, and of promotion of professional services staff (annually from June 2023) | At least 25% of men professional services staff take up a career development opportunity each year by July 2024 (from a baseline of 0% in 2022) |
| 3.4 | Annual sabbatical preparation workshops for academic staff; staff, especially women, encouraged to attend. Explicit publicity that sabbaticals are available for scholarship as well as for research. | As noted in section 2.2.3 above, sabbaticals can provide an opportunity to do things that are relevant to promotion. Most applications for sabbaticals have been from staff on the Education & Research role profile; there seems to be reluctance from those on the Education role profile (which includes all staff in the Professional Programmes department) to apply. Table 28 below shows the comparatively small number of applications for sabbaticals that are made and that female applicants generally accounted for less than 50% of applications until 2021/22. This data calls for steps to encourage staff, especially those on Education role profiles (many of whom are women), to apply for sabbaticals and equipping staff to make stronger sabbatical applications (also relevant to promotion) | Annual workshops take place from October 2024 | Associate Dean (EDI) | Annual workshops take place from October 2024 | Increase of at least 10% in the number of successful sabbatical applications made by women academic staff (from a baseline of 85% in 2022), with a view to achieving parity with men (from a baseline of 100% in 2022) by 2026  |
| **Key priority 4: Developing and prioritising gender equality initiatives that enhance early career researchers’ skills**  |
| **Ref** | **Action** | **Rationale** | **Timescale** | **Responsibility** | **Milestones** | **Success Indicators** |
| 4.1 | Create an early career researcher support group (to meet termly) and evaluate its effectiveness | As noted in section 2.2.4, CLS wants to do as much as we can to support early career researchers. One aspect of this is supporting staff in their research projects and in making grant funding applications (also relevant to promotion) | 1. Group established May 20232. Evaluation December 2024 | Associate Dean (Research) | 1. Group established (May 2023)2. Meetings take place at least termly from May 20233. Evaluation through a survey amongst early career researchers (December 2024) | In evaluation survey, establish baseline data on the effectiveness of the group and aim at least 80% of respondents of all genders express satisfaction with usefulness of group in supporting their research  |
| 4.2 | Providing annual advanced writing skills support (writing for REF, applying for external research funding, and increasing impact of research), including writing away days for research academics, focussing in particular on women and others with child/family care responsibilities | Following on from action 4.1:Supporting production of research outputs, equipping staff to satisfy the research requirements of the Education & Research role profile in a way that enhances promotion prospects. | 1. Support sessions started (from May 2024)2. Evaluation December 2024 | Associate Dean (Research) | 1. Support sessions take place (from May 2024)2. Evaluation through a survey (December 2025) | 1. At least one writing away day take place each year from academic year 2023/242. In evaluation survey, establish baseline data on effectiveness of the writing support initiative and aim at least 80% of respondents of all genders (on Education & Research role profile) express satisfaction with usefulness of this support in facilitating research-based writing |
| 4.3 | Provide annual writing and publication support workshops for staff seeking to build a profile in scholarship and professionally focussed writing | As is noted in section 2.2.3 above, academic staff on the Education role profile (some staff in the Academic Programmes department and all staff in the Professional Programmes department) are expected to engage in scholarship [defined as research that does not have to be REF-able]. Evidence of such scholarship (and the dissemination of its results) is an important requirement for promotion, especially beyond Senior Lecturer. This requires staff to be equipped to undertake such scholarship, with the aim of supporting staff on the Education role profile (many of whom are women) to achieve promotion. | 1. Workshops started (from May 2024)2. Evaluation December 2026 | Head of Department (Professional Programmes) | 1. Annual scholarship and writing workshop programme in place from May 20242. Evaluation through a survey (December 2026) | 1. At least one scholarship support workshop takes place each year from academic year 2023/242. In evaluation survey, establish baseline data on the effectiveness of the publication writing support workshop and aim at least 80% of respondents express satisfaction with usefulness of the support provided in facilitating scholarship |
| **Other actions:** **What follows relates to the broader EDI agenda of CLS****5. Governance (ensuring visibility of gender equality across CLS)** |
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| 5.1 | The EDI Committee has a dedicated Gender Equality lead to oversee and monitor the implementation of the action plan, working with the Associate Dean (EDI). | It is important that the actions set out in this action plan are taken in a timely manner. Ensuring timely implementation of this action plan and monitoring of its effectiveness is therefore crucial to its success. | From February 2023 | Chair of EDI Committee (AD EDI) and Gender Equality Lead | Reports on progress to each meeting of the EDI Committee | Sustained and successful delivery of this action plan |
| 5.2 | Six monthly EDI report to SLT, to include report to monitor implementation of this action plan, identifying any areas where actions are not being achieved when they should and identifying any support that is needed to ensure that those actions are achieved in a timely manner. | Monitoring progress in EDI against key metrics | From July 2023 | Chair of EDI Committee (AD EDI) | 1. SLT receives annual Gender Equality/Athena Swan report, with six monthly updates from July 20232. Reports and updates, and SLT response, published to staff from November 2023 | Annual reports (with six-month updates) submitted to SLT and published to staff after consideration by SLT from November 2023 |
| 5.3 | Develop and maintain the Athena Swan page on the Law School website to communicate progress both internally and externally. | As part of the CLS work in culture, we wish to take steps that have the effect of emphasising centrality of EDI and especially gender equality. | From October 2022 | Chair of EDI Committee (AD EDI) and Communications Officer (Member of the EDI Committee) | 1. Webpage reviewed (October 2022)2. Specific role-holder given responsibility of ensuring the web page is kept up to date, with six-monthly reviews from November 2023 (following SLT review in action 5.2) | Athena Swan/Gender Equality web page remains current |
| **6. Support for students and improving student attainment in the context of gender equality** |
| **Ref** | **Action** | **Rationale** | **Timescale** | **Responsibility** | **Milestones** | **Success Indicators** |
| 6.1 | Organise networking events and workshops to increase the graduate level employability of our women undergraduate students progressing onto our professional programmes. | As noted in section 2.1.3 above, CLS puts on a wide range of events, many of them relevant to employability. An important part ensuring the success of these events in enhancing the employability of our students is that networking events enhance gender equality, through the topics covered, the speakers, and attendees; and that the mode of delivery (in person/online/hybrid) maximises attendance | From January 2024 | Associate Dean (Student Experience) | 1. Colleagues will be mobilised to run workshop and organise events (January 2024)
2. First events and workshop (September 2025)
3. Collection of data for baseline (Ongoing from October 2025)
 | Establish baseline data for undergraduate women progression onto our professional programmes to see an annual increase of at least 5% |