

Athena Swan

The Athena Swan Charter is a national strategy that began as an initiative to promote gender equality in higher education, and it was launched in Ireland by the Higher Education Authority in 2015. After public consultation the Irish framing of the Athena SWAN accreditation now incorporates all the dimensions of equality sustained by Irish legislation. This includes, therefore, a commitment to eliminate discrimination on grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background.

The Department of Geography has committed itself to the Athena Swan process of critical self-assessment and after a rigorous application, we were one of the first departments at Maynooth to earn 'bronze status' two years ago. We are committed to this process of advancing gender equity and opportunity, which means that during the year we will offer workshops that you can participate in. You will certainly be asked to let us know how we are doing through the end of semester and year questions about the modules and teaching we offer. The responses are anonymised by the University Athena SWAN officer and then passed back to the Department where they are considered by our Athena SWAN Committee. Recommendations are then passed to the Head of Department, and discussed in our Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Research Committees, and at Staff Meetings.

In this, we are supported by the University with [its policies](#) addressing:

- the under-representation of women in higher administrative and academic offices in the university
- the need to make campus a place where diverse gender identity and expression are respected, including for our transgender and gender diverse staff and students; this includes policies supporting and listening to students and staff who raise concerns about bullying or sexual harassment by members of the university community, both staff and students
- a data collection and analysis system that alerts us to the many complex dimensions of equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism.

We know that gender and sexuality intersect with other forms of discrimination in society, including around race, class, physical and mental challenges, citizenship-status, and

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nationality. You know it too, and with your help we will learn how to make Maynooth University a leader in recognising the needs and sustaining the flourishing of the diverse community of our state. There is a video link here: [Geography Department Athena Swan](#) and you can find further information from the university here: maynoothuniversity.ie/athena-swan. If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact our Athena Swan Committee Chair, Professor Karen Till, karen.till@mu.ie.

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