

## Silver Action Plan 2022-2027

### List of abbreviations

ACDC	Academic Career Development Committee
BBSRC	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
CORE	Committee for Outreach & Research Engagement
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 19
DHoS	Deputy Head of School
DORA	Declaration on Research Assessment
DTP	Doctoral Training Programme
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
EDIG	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group
F	Female
FT	Fixed-term
HE	Higher Education
HoS	Head of School
HR	Human Resources
JAM	Job Allocation Model
KEF	Knowledge Exchange Framework
M	Male
PAT	Personal Academic Tutor
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PPDR	Personal Performance and Development Review
PR	Professional Registration
Q & A	Question & Answer
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RIS	Research Innovation Services
SoBS	School of Biological Sciences
STM	Senior Technical Manager
ToR	Terms of Reference
UG	Undergraduate
YIE	Year In Employment

The action plan is broken into 3 themes: EDIG (Objectives E1 – E4), Students (Objectives S1 – S5) and Staff and Culture (Objectives C1 – C18).

**Key Priorities** (KP, these should be specific and detailed, allowing the department to target attention to areas of greatest need):

KP1. Enhance the impact of our EDI initiatives by increasing representation of women at all levels in our activities, sharing best practice both internally and externally and promoting women role models (E2, E3, E4).

KP2. Demonstrate our commitment to gender equality for our UG and PGR students by embedding EDI as a central element in their education and training (S4, S5).

KP3. Develop and implement measures that minimise the gender impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on career progression (C4, C5, C6, C9).

KP4. Align our measures with the new University EDI Strategic Plan to build a more inclusive culture in SoBS (C15, C16, C17, C18).

**NOTES:**

- *The Aims are broad statements of what we would like to achieve overall; the Actions are SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely with corresponding Measure of Success.*
- *The responsibility for carrying out actions lies with the relevant staff or student appointed to a particular role as part of their citizenship duties or the administrative staff member responsible for an activity such as monitoring training and mentoring uptake data. The timing of actions is under constant review by the EDIG, HoS and relevant staff involved in action implementation.*

<b>EDIG: Self-Assessment Process</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
<b>E1.</b> Enhanced effectiveness of the EDIG.	<i>EDIG improved its membership to include representatives from all career stage and work patterns, as well as 3 UG students. We also recruited a Staff Engagement Champion. However, despite being</i>	<b>E1a:</b> Design materials promoting the EDIG work to be included in the staff induction PowerPoint presentation. The materials will also make it clear research technicians have an equally important role as pool technicians in our EDI activities.	HoS & EDIG chair	Jan-Apr 2022	Promotion materials allowing increased engagement of research technicians with our EDI activities designed and

<p><i>gender balanced with 50% female, membership requires continued monitoring to adequately reflect staff makeups, ethnicity and gender. Additionally, given our ambition to promote better the EDIG and Athena SWAN principles, we aim to strengthen our communication.</i></p>	<p><b>E1b:</b> Nominate the Senior Technical Manager (STM) to liaise with line managers to identify a research technician member.</p>	<p>HoS &amp; EDIG chair &amp; STM</p>	<p>Jan-Apr 2022</p>	<p>presented during the induction process.</p> <p>Pool and research technician representatives on the EDIG.</p>
	<p><b>E1c:</b> Change in ToR to reflect inclusion of a Communication Champion on the EDIG who will promote our work on gender equality through events and web and social media presence.</p>	<p>HoS &amp; EDIG chair</p>	<p>Jan-Apr 2022</p>	<p>Inclusion of a Communication Champion position, reflected in the ToR.</p>
	<p><b>E1d:</b> Establish an annual review of the EDIG membership for staff groupings, UG and PGR students, gender balance and other protected characteristics such as ethnicity, as well as other factors including mode of working, workload, and career stage.</p>	<p>HoS &amp; EDIG chair</p>	<p>Jan-Apr annually 2022-2025</p>	<p>Annual membership review in place. Representation on EDIG of staff and student groups, male, and female is balanced: representation, reflective of composition of SoBS.</p>
	<p><b>E1e:</b> Ensure EDIG roles are correctly recognised in the Job Allocation Model (JAM)</p>	<p>HoS &amp; EDIG chair</p>	<p>Apr-Jul annually 2022-2025</p>	<p>Staff with EDIG roles report during appraisal that their work is correctly recognised in the JAM.</p>

		<b>E1e:</b> Set a 3-year terms-of office membership for EDIG and ensure overlap with new and existing members to facilitate handover. List of new members included in MS SharePoint and EDIG website.	HoS & EDIG chair & champions	Jan-Apr 2022, Jan-Apr 2025	A 3-year membership period of EDIG in place, and process of appointing members before terms of office are completed and established. List of new members included in SharePoint and the EDIG website.
<b>E2.</b> Increased awareness of EDI and Athena SWAN practice in SoBS.	<i>It is SoBS ambition to embed EDI more in our education, research, and enterprise. In the 2020 SoBS culture survey, awareness of gender equality increased from 70% to 85% for staff (79%F, 88%M) and from 38% to 75% for PGR students (75%F, 75%M) as compared to 2016. However, we did not reach our target of 95% positive responses. Moreover, in a focus group with UG students it was reported that students would like to learn more about EDI issues in SoBS. Finally online promotion of our Athena SWAN practice and women role models in all academic pipelines is expected to</i>	<b>E2a:</b> Revamp our website and create a twitter account to enhance the promotion of EDIG activities and women role models both internally and externally.	EDIG communication champion	Jan-Apr 2022	EDIG revamped website and new Twitter account launched.  Enhanced impact of EDIG activities and women role model promotion, measured by increased webpage hits and downloads, followers, and retweets.
		<b>E2b:</b> Raise awareness to staff and students of the University's new EDI Strategic Plan at our new EDI annual symposium (see E2e).	EDIG & University EDI advisor	Dec annually 2022-2025	95% of staff and students (men and women) agree they are informed about gender equality

	<i>enhance SoBS external perception.</i>	<b>E2c:</b> Report progress on action plan at staff meetings and full school board committee meetings to ensure staff are aware of gender equality issues and to design new actions.	EDIG chair & deputy chair	Sep annually 2023-2025	matters that affect them in 2023 and 2025 SoBS culture surveys and new actions developed where appropriate.
		<b>E2d:</b> Include EDIG activities in the HoS digest e-mails, which will also include a link to our online anonymous feedback mailbox.	HoS	Quarterly 2022-2025	
		<b>E2e:</b> Introduce a SoBS annual EDI symposium to increase engagement with EDIG activities, promote women role models, highlight Athena SWAN achievements, and discuss future actions.	EDIG staff engagement champion & University head of EDI	Dec annually 2022-2025	SoBS annual EDI symposium attended by >65% of staff and students.  Contributions to activities that promote EDI recognised, rewarded, and valued.  Representation and participation of women in our activities is increased and promoted.  Impact of the annual EDI symposium

					reviewed based on feedback from participants, and new measures introduced as appropriate.
<b>E3.</b> Increased positive impact of the EDIG work on gender equality through dissemination of good practice both locally and externally.	<i>The EDIG representation at Faculty EDIC and University EDI Network is important to ensure continued dissemination of good practice from SoBS and to collaborate with other EDI Champions to develop and implement new measures that lead to a broader positive impact on gender equality. This will also allow alignment of our measures with the new University of Southampton EDI Strategic Plan launched in June 2021.</i>	<b>E3a:</b> Actively contribute to Faculty EDIC and University EDI Network activities and meetings and collaborate with other departments/schools to share best practice on local implementation of the University EDI Strategic Plan.	HoS & EDIG chair & deputy chair	Quarterly 2022-2026	EDIG champions from other schools across the University taking on board best practice developed in SoBS and reporting on their success during meetings.
		<b>E3b:</b> Participate in EDI national events, such as those organised by Advance HE, to share and acquire good practice.	EDIG chair & deputy chair	Jun-Oct annually 2022-2026	Attendance at 2-3 national events per year from 2022 onwards.  Good EDI practice in SoBS actively disseminated and shared at national events.
		<b>E3c:</b> Ensure information on EDI related issues is kept up to date on the SoBS handbooks and EDIG website and use the website to promote and write about EDI activities and events, promote	EDIG & communication champion	Biannually Jan-Mar, Jul-Sep 2023-2026	Information about gender equality issues updated on staff and student handbooks, EDIG website by Dec 2022,

		women role models, and share good practice.			followed by bi-annual updates of progress and any amendments in the action plan to reflect new measures developed and implemented in SoBS.
<b>E4.</b> Increased engagement of staff and PGRs with our culture surveys.	<i>In addition to being valuable for collating data about the challenges females encounter in their career, the staff and PGR culture surveys are also important to gauge the level of engagement with the EDIG activities. While the overall response rate in the 2020 SoBS culture survey remained similar as compared to 2016, we found that PGRs' response rate remained very low and decreased slightly from 31% (2016, 78%F) to 28% (2020, 75%F).</i>	<b>E4a</b> Hold focus groups with PGRs to gain a better understanding of the reasons why they respond less to our surveys and design actions to increase their engagement with our 2023 and 2025 culture surveys.	EDIG PGR champions	Feb 2023 and 2025	>65% (male and female) response rate on staff and PGR culture surveys in 2023 and 2025:  >80% technical and support staff >80% research staff >70% fixed-term staff >60% academic staff >50% PGRs
		<b>E4b:</b> Utilise the learning from action E4a to better promote SoBS surveys by e-mail and other identified methods to encourage staff and PGRs to take up the survey. Make it clear that our culture surveys are a key consultation mechanism that informs the design of new actions to improve gender equality in SoBS.	EDIG staff engagement champion & EDIG PGR champions & EDIG administrative officer	Apr-May 2023 and 2025	
		<b>E4c:</b> Ensure engagement with the culture surveys by communicating aggregated reports at staff meetings and by e-mail, collate feedback and design new actions as appropriate.	EDIG chair & EDIG administrative officer	Sep-Dec 2023 and 2025	

**Students: Enrolment, Progression, and Support**

Objective	Rationale	Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures of Success
<p><b>S1.</b> Gender equality in academic performance of our UGs and improved employability and graduate prospects.</p>	<p><i>The performance gap between men and women achieving good degrees (1<sup>st</sup> and 2:1 combined) decreased from 15% in 2016/17 to 5% in 2019/20. However, 50%F obtained a 1<sup>st</sup> as compared to 29%M in 2019/20. It is important to investigate any impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality in academic performance. We also aim to increase our support for our UGs' employability and enhance gender and ethnicity participation.</i></p>	<p><b>S1a:</b> Perform a gender impact assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic on final year degree classifications and design new actions as appropriate.</p>	<p>EDIG &amp; DHoS (education)</p>	<p>Jul 2022 and Jul 2023</p>	<p>Evidence-based understanding of the gender impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on degree classification, and design new actions if appropriate.</p> <p>Continued gender equality in achieving 1<sup>st</sup> and 2:1.</p>
		<p><b>S1b:</b> Design a PowerPoint slide deck including promotional materials for the UG year-in-employment (YIE) placements and send a clear guidance to PATs including holding a meeting with their second-year tutees to raise engagement with YIE and encourage uptake.</p>	<p>Employability lead &amp; PATs</p>	<p>June-Sep annually 2022-2025</p>	<p>PowerPoint promoting YIE developed and presented by PATs to UGs.</p> <p>20% increase in uptake of YIE in SoBS and gender equality in uptake ensured.</p>
		<p><b>S1c:</b> Publicise the new summer placements programme offered by our BBSRC SoCoBio DTP (designed to improve participation of under-represented UG groups), by e-mail</p>	<p>PATs / Employability lead</p>	<p>Jan-Apr annually 2022-2025</p>	<p>Uptake of BBSRC SoCoBio DTP summer placements by SoBS UGs with gender equality in success</p>



		and at UG tutorials and provide the link to the DTP website where guidance on the application process can be found.			rates, and design new actions if appropriate to increase uptake.
		<b>S1d:</b> Monitor and report annually on graduate and employability prospects by gender and ethnicity.	EDIG & Employability lead	Apr-Jul annually 2022-2024	Evidence-based understanding of the gender profile in graduate and employability prospects for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23, new actions designed as appropriate to ensure gender equality.  Gender equality in achieving employment and graduate prospects >80%.
<b>S2.</b> Enhanced support for mental health of UG students in SoBS.	<i>While the numbers are low, preliminary data show more female than male students (2015/16 and 2016/17 entrants) declare mental health issues in their special consideration applications. We need to expand our analysis by including data from 2017/18-2019/20</i>	<b>S2a:</b> Analyse special consideration application data from 2017/18-2019/20 UG cohorts and determine any gender bias in declaring mental health issues and whether this was influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.	EDIG & Senior academic tutor	Apr-Sep 2022	Evidence-based knowledge of the gender split of mental health issues declared in the special consideration applications, and design new actions as appropriate.

	<i>cohorts to guide the design of new measures to improve support for UGs' mental health.</i>				
		<b>S2b:</b> Introduce the Solent Mind Mental Health Awareness online training for all PATs and monitor uptake.	HoS & Senior academic tutor	Jun 2022 to Jun 2023	100% uptake of Mental Health Awareness training by PATs by 2024.
		<b>S2c:</b> Promote Mental Health First Aid training at staff meetings and by e-mail and encourage uptake by PATs.	EDIG & Senior academic tutor & Staff wellbeing officer	Jun annually 2022-2024	>30% uptake of Mental Health First Aid training by PATs.
		<b>S2d:</b> Promote Mental Health Awareness training and encourage more uptake from UG students, at tutorials and by e-mail, and monitor uptake by gender.	EDIG & Senior academic tutor & UG wellbeing officer	Oct annually 2022-2026	>20% uptake of Mental Health Awareness training by male and female UG students.
<b>S3.</b> UG students declaring mental or physical health issues are supported during field courses in SoBS.	<i>Our field courses surveys in 2019/20 and 2020/21 revealed a few UG students declaring mental health issues as well as two transitioning trans students. We aim to enhance our support for mental and</i>	<b>S3a:</b> Include materials in the pre-trip workshop raising awareness of mental and physical health to encourage students to declare, in the e-survey, any issues that may prevent them from enjoying fully their field course.	Module organizer for the first-year field course	Apr 2022	Students with mental or physical health issues and with specific needs supported before and after the field course.

	<i>physical health of our UG students during field courses.</i>	<b>S3b:</b> Develop guidance including holding an e-survey and arranging meeting with students declaring issues and trans students and confidentially discuss their circumstances and ensure their requirements are met during the field course trip.	Module organizer for the first-year field course & HoS	Jan-Apr annually 2022-2026	Trans students supported before and after the field course.  Good feedback from students on their return.  No inappropriate behaviour on field trips.
		<b>S3c:</b> Review students' feedback from post-trip survey and meetings to identify further measure required to prevent inappropriate behaviour.	Module organizer for the first-year field course & HoS	Jun annually 2022-2026	
<b>S4.</b> EDI training introduced for newly recruited UG students.	<i>Following feedback from our UG student focus group, we aim to embed better EDI in our education. It is important to increase engagement of UGs with the Athena SWAN ethos in SoBS.</i>	<b>S4a:</b> Design a "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion" flipped learning activity addressing unconscious bias and gender and ethnicity equality and obtain all approvals, before sending the EDI learning materials by e-mail to all PATs, with a clear explanation of the learning outcomes to be achieved.	EDIG & HoS & DHoS (education) & Senior academic tutor & EDIG administrative officer	Jun-Sep 2022	"Equality, Diversity and Inclusion" learning materials designed, approved, and introduced to tutorials in Oct 2022.  100% completion rate, and 100% positive responses to the question "I am aware of the equality, diversity and inclusion issues that affect me and my lecturers" in post a training survey.
		<b>S4b:</b> Introduce the EDI flipped learning activity as an integral part of the tutorial programme for newly recruited UGs.	Senior academic tutor & PATs	Oct 2022	

<p><b>S5.</b> Improvement in our support to PGR students for their professional development and career progression.</p>	<p><i>Only 79% of PGR students (68%F, 82%M) agreed they receive enough support to achieve their career goals. We aim to include measures that increase support for PGRs' personnel and professional development, by embedding EDI as a central element in their training.</i></p>	<p><b>S5a:</b> Hold a focus group with PGR students to discuss their training needs, identify barriers to uptake.</p>	<p>Director of graduate school &amp; EDIG PGR champions</p>	<p>Jul 2022</p>	<p>Evidence-based understanding of PGRs' professional development training needs, barriers to uptake identified and new actions designed to remove them.</p> <p>&gt;90% of male and female PGRs agree that advice, coaching, mentoring, training and/or other support provided by the School of Biological Sciences help them progress from their PhD study and in their career, in the 2023 and 2025 SoBS culture surveys; new activities developed if appropriate.</p>
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		<p><b>S5b:</b> Promote the SoBS new mentoring programme via the PGR induction process and handbook and make it clear it offers support for personal and professional development and fosters peer-to-peer support. Monitor uptake by gender and design actions as appropriate.</p>	<p>Director of graduate school &amp; EDIG</p>	<p>Oct-Nov annually 2022-2026</p>	<p>&gt;70% uptake of mentoring programme by PGRs from 2023 onwards.</p>
		<p><b>S5c:</b> Introduce our online unconscious bias training as a mandatory course for all PGR students teaching or demonstrating at our laboratory practicals, monitor uptake and design new actions as appropriate.</p>	<p>Director of graduate school &amp; EDIG</p>	<p>Oct 2022</p>	<p>100% uptake of unconscious bias training by PGRs involved in our teaching.</p>
		<p><b>S5d:</b> Introduce a mandatory EDI session presented by the EDIG chair addressing the Athena SWAN ethos and our EDI work, for all PGRs during the induction process.</p>	<p>EDIG &amp; EDIG chair Director of Graduate School</p>	<p>Oct 2022</p>	<p>A 1hr mandatory EDI session embedded in the PGR induction process.</p> <p>100% uptake of EDI session by PGRs during the induction process.</p>

**Staff & Culture: Key Career Transition Points**

Objective	Rationale	Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures of Success
<p><b>C1.</b> Increase in the proportion of women on permanent academic positions in SoBS.</p>	<p><i>We achieved a steady reduction in FT contracts in SoBS between 2017 and 2021, with the proportion of women on FT decreasing from 55% in 2017 to 44% in 2021. However, %F permanent Level 5-7 academics remains low at 30.5% in 2020/21. We aim to improve recruitment of women on permanent academic positions over the next years.</i></p>	<p><b>C1a:</b> Ensure, through guidance and monitoring, that staff involved in academic recruitment and interview panels enrol in the new University Super Recruiters Network and attend training over four mandatory modules (unconscious bias training, inclusive recruitment webinar, active bystander training &amp; Leadership, Management and Development e-learning module).</p>	<p>HoS &amp; EDIG</p>	<p>Jan-Jun 2022</p>	<p>All staff involved in recruitment and interview panels are enrolled in the Super Recruiters Network and receive appropriate training.</p> <p>EDI guidance for inclusive recruitment.</p> <p>Proportion of women on permanent academic positions increases to 40% by 2025.</p>
		<p><b>C1b:</b> Introduce job advert guidance including examples and ideas of gender neutral and inclusive wording that can be used in SoBS Job adverts to attract a wider candidate base and thereby more women.</p>	<p>HoS &amp; EDIG</p>	<p>Mar 2022</p>	
		<p><b>C1c:</b> Develop guidance to include EDI champions in recruitment and interview processes as a standard practice.</p>	<p>HoS &amp; EDIG</p>	<p>Mar 2022</p>	
		<p><b>C1d:</b> Develop guidance including a reminder about unconscious bias and potential gendered language in materials relating to recruitment.</p>	<p>HoS &amp; EDIG</p>	<p>Mar 2022</p>	

<b>C2.</b> Better understanding of the reasons why staff leave SoBS and any gender biases in this.	<i>The University launched an online exit survey in 2017. However, completion rates have been extremely low and therefore there is very limited data to analyse and provide valuable insights. It is important to implement new measures in our school that allow us to understand why staff leave SoBS and determine whether there are any gender-related issues.</i>	<b>C2a:</b> Ensure, through guidance and monitoring, that line managers hold a pre-exit meeting with leavers to identify any gender related issues to the reasons why they leave SoBS and to encourage them to take up the University exit survey.	HoS & Line managers	Jan annually 2022-2026	Pre-exit meetings with line managers embedded in the leaver process in SoBS.  >50% of leavers taking up the exit survey in 2022.
		<b>C2b:</b> Introduce a pilot SoBS exit interview as a standard part of the leavers process and monitor uptake.	EDIG & Staff Engagement Champion	Mar 2022 to Mar 2024	>50% of leavers taking up the exit interview between 2022 and 2024. Design new actions if appropriate.
		<b>C2c:</b> Monitor the number of staff leavers by gender and other protected characteristics and capture reasons for leaving from exit interviews, pre-exit meetings with line managers and University exit surveys.	EDIG & HoS & HR	Mar 2022 to Mar 2024	2022 to 2023 exit data analysed, feedback collated, any gendered differences in reasons for leaving determined, and revise actions if appropriate.
<b>C3.</b> Improved effectiveness of SoBS Staff induction.	<i>We have taken onboard feedback from new starters to improve the content of the staff induction process over the past years in SoBS as</i>	<b>C3a:</b> Introduce a printed department handbook for all staff that will be made available at the induction	EDIG	Mar 2022	Handbook included in the induction booklet from Mar 2022 onwards.

	<p><i>evidenced by 83% of positive responses on average (85%F, 80%M). We aim to take on board some suggestions in the surveys to improve the induction process, which we also want to use to promote our activities aiming to build a more inclusive workplace.</i></p>	<p>session as well as in the EDIG website and School's SharePoint.</p>			
		<p><b>C3b:</b> Introduce a session in the induction process where the president of the postdoctoral society promotes their activities and encourages new starters to become active members.</p>	<p>HoS &amp; Postdoctoral society president</p>	<p>Oct 2022</p>	<p>&gt;75% membership at the postdoctoral society from Oct 2023 onwards.</p>
		<p><b>C3c:</b> Analyse surveys data broken down by gender to identify strengths and weaknesses of the induction process and design new actions to improve the process where appropriate.</p>	<p>EDIG &amp; EDIG administrative officer</p>	<p>Oct 2022 to Oct 2024</p>	<p>Survey completed and &gt;90% of new staff find the Induction session held in the school a valuable part of the Induction process, in the 2022-2024 post-induction surveys, collate feedback and design new actions as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>C4.</b> Improvement of the promotion process in SoBS.</p>	<p><i>In the 2020 SoBS culture survey, we found a gender difference in the proportion of academic staff that are happy with the promotion process (77%F; 85%M). Our survey on the impacts of COVID-19 showed that women were concerned about the impact of the</i></p>	<p><b>C4a:</b> Ensure, through guidance and monitoring, that line managers hold a discussion during the appraisal meeting with staff seeking promotion about barriers to progress in their activities due to the pandemic and report them in the COVID-19 Disruption's Statement in the promotion application form.</p>	<p>HoS &amp; Line managers</p>	<p>Jan-Jun annually 2022-2025</p>	<p>Increase in the proportion of female staff applying for promotion.</p> <p>&gt;90% of male and female staff agree they receive sufficient support and</p>



	<i>pandemic on their career progression. It is important to include measures to minimise the gender impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on promotion of women over the next years.</i>	<b>C4b:</b> Develop guidance embedding EDI as a central element in the assessment of promotion applications at the School Academic Career Development Committee (ACDC), where the EDIG is represented by the HoS.	HoS	Sep 2022	guidance for their promotion application in the 2023 and 2025 SoBS culture surveys.
		<b>C4c:</b> Develop guidance for the ACDC implementing the University Responsible Research Metric Policy to evaluate research outputs, in line with DORA and the Leiden Manifesto.	HoS	Sep 2022	
<b>C5.</b> Increased support to newly recruited academic staff during their probatory period.	<i>Our COVID-19 Impact survey highlighted concerns about the gender impact of the pandemic on career progression of newly recruited academics.</i>	<b>C5a:</b> Remove or extend start-up funds expiration dates for all academic staff recruited during the pandemic.	HoS	Jan 2022	Start-up package extended beyond the probation period for all academic staff on probation in 2022.
		<b>C5b:</b> Enrol mid-career academics who recently passed their probation in our mentoring programme as mentors and assign them to newly recruited academics to provide them with peer-to-peer support and career advice to successfully navigate the probation period.	HoS	Mar 2022 to Mar 2025	Peer-to-peer mentors assigned to all newly recruited academics, and time committed to mentoring is recognised in the JAM workload model.

		<p><b>C5c:</b> Develop guidance prioritising academic staff on probation for the uptake of the grant writing training and support provided by the University Research and Innovation Services (RIS) and include information about the support provided by RIS in the welcome pack sent to newly recruited academics.</p>	HoS & DHoS (research)	Mar 2022	<p>100% uptake of grant writing training.</p> <p>Grant application rate of 100% by new academic staff within the first year of probation.</p>
		<p><b>C5d:</b> Ensure, through guidance and reporting, that line managers hold meetings with academic staff on probation to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their activities and remove the barriers that hinder their transition to tenure.</p>	HoS & Line managers	Mar annually 2022-2025	<p>100% of new academic staff pass probation successfully.</p>
		<p><b>C5e:</b> Introduce a COVID-19 Impact Statement in the probation dossiers, and template provided including clear guidance on probation criteria.</p>	HoS / ACDC	Mar 2022	
<b>Staff &amp; Culture: Career Development</b>					
Objective	Rationale	Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures of Success
<p><b>C6.</b> Improved information flow about promotion and training.</p>	<p><i>The 2020 SoBS culture survey shows that 86% (73%F, 100%M) of research staff find our support for promotion is effective, and</i></p>	<p><b>C6a:</b> Introduce a school database for continuous recording and monitoring of training uptake by research staff by gender.</p>	EDIG & Research staff champion & Concordat	Apr 2022 to Apr 2024	Evidence-based knowledge of professional training uptake, and new

opportunities for research staff.	<i>only 47% (51%F;43%M) of research staff find our support for professional development is effective. Therefore, we did not achieve our targets set in the 2017 Action Plan. It is important to include new measures that improve our support for research staff career progression and training opportunities.</i>				actions designed as appropriate.
		<b>C6b:</b> Introduce a Q&A session at the school’s staff meeting ahead of each promotion round to explain and provide an update about the promotion process for research staff and what the criteria are and make it clear that promotion is also available to them.	HoS	Sep 2022	Positive responses in the SoBS culture survey for research staff for the questions related promotion and progression go up to 80% (2023) and 90% (2025) for women and men.
		<b>C6c:</b> Send guidance to appraisers to take up the University “Appraising with Confidence” training. The guidance will also make it clear there is an expectation that promotion is discussed during appraisals.	HoS	Jan annually 2022-2025	>50% of staff taking up the Appraising with Confidence training in 2022, with uptake increasing to 75% by 2025.
		<b>C6d:</b> Send guidance to appraisers of research staff on training opportunities during each appraisal window. Make it clear that there is an expectation that training needs are discussed during appraisals, and barriers hindering uptake are removed.	HoS	Jan annually 2022-2025	>85% of research staff agree their line manager supports their career development, in response to the 2023 SoBS culture survey, increasing to 90% in 2025.

<p><b>C7.</b> Improvement in the career progression process for all technical staff in SoBS.</p>	<p><i>100% of male and female technical staff are happy with the professional development opportunities in the SoBS 2020 culture survey. While all male technical staff are happy with the professional progression process, only 85% female are aware of it. We aim to include new measures to ensure training, coaching and mentoring opportunities are available for all technical staff in SoBS and make the career progression process more transparent.</i></p>	<p><b>C7a:</b> Send guidance to the STM and line managers including holding a discussion with technicians during the Personal Performance and Development Review (PPDR) to identify their needs in mentoring and coaching to achieve their career goals. Make it clear the SoBS' mentoring program is also for them and they can enrol in as mentors or mentees.</p>	HoS	Jan annually 2022-2025	100% of technical staff agree advice, coaching, mentoring, training and/or other support provided by the School of Biological Sciences help them progress in their career, as determined in the 2023 and 2025 SoBS culture surveys.
		<p><b>C7b:</b> Ensure continued review of effectiveness of the school's training and mentoring support for technical staff during the annual PPDR to ensure pool technicians are ready to progress to upper grade positions when these become available.</p>	STM	Jan 2022 to Dec 2024	100% of technical staff report to understand the promotion process and criteria in SoBS as determined in the 2023 and 2025 culture surveys.
		<p><b>C7c:</b> Hold two focus groups with technical staff to review effectiveness of the summer research projects, identify issues related to gender equity that may affect the application process and identify areas of improvements in the training to ensure they help them progress in their career.</p>	STM	Apr 2022 to Apr 2023	

		<b>C7d:</b> Send guidance to line managers via e-mail including holding a discussion with their research technicians about support/funding available for them to pursue Professional Registration (PR) and encourage application. Make it clear PR is a professional recognition mechanism that can help them to be regraded or promoted.	HoS & Line managers & STM	Jan annually 2022-2025	
<b>C8.</b> Mentoring programme in SoBS is more effective.	<i>In response to the 2020 culture survey results showing the need for strengthening our mentoring support we designed a new mentoring program in 2020 for all staff and PGRs, which promotes peer-to-peer personnel and professional support. Uptake of the programme has been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. We aim to review the program to identify areas needing improvement.</i>	<b>C8a:</b> Ensure continued communication about the school's mentoring programme via the staff and PGR handbooks, induction process, e-mail and staff meetings and make it clear it is for all staff and PGRs and that being a mentor is valued and important for their personal and professional development.	HoS & EDIG & SoBS administrative officer	Jan-Apr annually 2022-2024	Accurate knowledge of uptake of the mentoring programme by gender and assessment of effectiveness, and new actions designed, when necessary, in 2024.
		<b>C8b:</b> Ensure continued effectiveness of the mentoring programme by monitoring uptake by gender (PGRs and staff), conducting an annual review of membership and ensuring mentees are aware they can change their mentor or ask for another mentor depending on changes in their personal and/or professional circumstances.	EDIG & SoBS administrative officers	Sep-Nov annually 2022-2024	>60% (75% PGRs, 50% staff) uptake of the mentoring scheme in 2024.  >90% of staff and students (male and female) agree advice, coaching, mentoring, training and/or other

					support provided by the School of Biological Sciences help them progress in their career, as determined in the 2023 and then 2025 SoBS culture surveys
		<b>C8c:</b> Hold focus groups with PGRs and staff to assess effectiveness of the mentoring programme to identify areas needing improvement and/or any gender equity related issues that may prevent uptake.	EDIG champions	Sep 2022 to Sep 2024	
<b>C9.</b> Women academics are supported to continue to produce high quality research outputs.	<i>Women represented 29% of REF2021 eligible staff but contributed to 33% of total outputs. These good results may be challenged by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on women's research activity. It is important to develop and implement new measures that ensure sustained research productivity of women in the next years.</i>	<b>C9a:</b> Perform a gender impact analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic on research publication and grant application and success rates between 2020 to Dec 2021 and compare to data from previous years.	EDIG & DHoS (research) & Faculty finance	Jan-Apr 2022	Evidence-based understanding of the impact of the pandemic on research inputs and outputs of women academics in SoBS.
		<b>C9b:</b> Send a separate e-mail to all women academics on support for grant writing and application processes provided by our mentoring programme and the University RIS. This e-mail will make it clear that support is also designed to reduce time spent on grant	DHoS (research)	Feb 2022	Barriers to ability of women academic staff to publish or apply for grants removed.

		writing and related administrative workload.			Gender equality in grant application and success rates.
		<b>C9c:</b> Ensure, through guidance and reporting, that line managers hold a discussion with women academic staff during appraisal about barriers to publication or grant applications, and design actions to remove them.	HoS & Line managers	Jan annually 2022-2025	All women academic staff deliver REF-eligible outputs by 2026.
		<b>C9d:</b> Develop guidance ensuring support is provided for women academics who are the most significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and want to take up a short academic sabbatical leave to allow them write research grants and papers.	HoS	June to Sep 2022	

**Culture & Staff: Flexible working and managing career breaks**

Objective	Rationale	Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures of Success
<b>C10.</b> Increased awareness, satisfaction and uptake of support available during and after maternity and caring leave.	<i>All staff who have taken maternity leave are aware of relevant policies. 88% of staff are aware of policies on parental/family leave. However, only 80% (77%F, 83%M) are happy with the information flow about</i>	<b>C10a:</b> Ensure continued communication via e-mail and the staff handbook about our mentoring scheme that offers support for parenthood, caring responsibilities and flexible working and encourage staff who have been on maternity /	HoS & EDIG communication champion	Apr-Jun annually 2022-2025	>95% awareness and satisfaction of the support for parental/family leave for men and women staff in the SoBS 2023

<p><i>equality and diversity matters that affect them. Thus, we have partially achieved our target. We aim to include new measures to improve awareness and uptake of the support to parents and carers during and after leave.</i></p>	<p>adoption / caring / shared parental leave to sign up as mentors. Ensures an up-to-date list of mentors is available on SoBS SharePoint and EDI webpage.</p>			<p>and 2025 culture surveys.</p>
	<p><b>C10b:</b> Ensure information about support for maternity / adoption / caring / shared parental leave and links to policies are incorporated in SoBS staff handbook and continue to be available on the EDIG webpage.</p>	EDIG	Apr 2022	<p>Parental/family policies available online and included in the staff handbook and updated each year if necessary.</p>
	<p><b>C10c:</b> Ensure continued communication via e-mail and the staff handbook information about family leave support and policies and include links to up-to-date policies in the staff handbook and the EDIG webpage.</p>	HoS & EDIG communication champion	Apr-Jun annually 2022-2025	<p>Increased uptake of support around all types of caring leave.</p>
	<p><b>C10d:</b> Introduce new Return-to-Work Guidelines for line managers in SoBS as a standard framework to support staff and students returning from maternity / adoption / caring / shared parental leave, monitor its effectiveness and design new actions as appropriate.</p>	EDIG & HoS & Line managers	Sep 2022 to Sep 2024	



<p><b>C11.</b> Increased awareness, satisfaction and uptake of support for flexible working.</p>	<p><i>Satisfaction of staff about support for flexible working in SoBS, in the 2020 survey as compared to 2016: 86%F research staff (40% in 2016); 86%F technical staff (50% in 2016). However, we recorded a decrease in women academic staff satisfaction from 83% in 2016 to 69%. We aim to gain a better knowledge of requests for flexible/part-time working from the point of request through to agreement for all staff and ensure that women and men have equal access.</i></p>	<p><b>C11a:</b> Ensure, through guidance, that line managers report on discussions and requests for flexible/part-time working at the appraisal and PPDR meetings.</p>	HoS & EDIG	Jan annually 2022-2025	<p>Evidence-based understanding of flexible working arrangements from the point of request to approval/rejection, and design new actions as appropriate.</p> <p>&gt;95% awareness and satisfaction of the support provisions for flexible and part-time working for men and women staff in 2023 and 2025 SoBS culture surveys.</p> <p>Flexible/part-time working policies available online and included in staff handbook and updated each year if necessary.</p> <p>All flexible hours included in emails or reasons why not determined and new actions designed if appropriate.</p>
		<p><b>C11b:</b> Develop guidance ensuring staff include their working hours in their email signatures.</p>	HoS & EDIG	Jan 2022	
		<p><b>C11c:</b> Ensure, through guidance and reporting, that line managers discuss flexible and part-time working and the new Return-to-work plan with staff returning from family and caring leave, during the appraisal and PPDR meetings.</p>	HoS & EDIG	Jan annually 2022-2025	
		<p><b>C11d:</b> Ensure continued communication via e-mail and the staff handbook about school's support for flexible and part-time working and ensure information and policies are included in the staff handbook and available on SharePoint and the EDIG webpage.</p>	HoS & EDIG communication champion	Apr-Jun annually 2022-2025	

**Staff & Culture: Organisation and Culture**

Objective	Rationale	Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Measures of Success
<p><b>C12.</b> Line managers are supported to achieve a more effective line management.</p>	<p><i>We achieved a significant increase in satisfaction for all questions related to management in the 2020 culture survey. On average this was 80% for all staff in 2020 SoBS culture survey, as compared to 64% in 2016. This improvement is even higher for fixed-term staff with a jump from 53% to 85%. Therefore, we exceeded our target of 10% increase. However, female staff remain less positive than male staff with an average difference of 6%. We aim to improve effectiveness of line management through training and mentoring of line managers.</i></p>	<p><b>C12a:</b> Implement a communication plan to encourage line managers to enrol in the SoBS mentoring program and make it clear that it includes a “Leadership and line management” support theme, monitor uptake and design actions as appropriate.</p>	HoS	Feb-Aug annually 2022-2025	<p>&gt;50% of line managers enrolled in the SoBS mentoring programme, in 2025.</p> <p>&gt;90% positive responses in all questions related to line management, for women and men in 2023 and 2025 SoBS culture surveys.</p>
		<p><b>C12b:</b> Ensure, through guidance and monitoring, that line managers take up the new University Line Management Development Programme. Make it clear that training is mandatory for all line managers at all levels. Design actions as appropriate</p>	HoS & Line managers	Mar 2022 to Mar 2023	<p>All line managers taking up the University Line Management Development Programme by 2023.</p>
<p><b>C13.</b> Equity of allocation and recognition of outreach activities.</p>	<p><i>There is gender balance in participation to the SoBS Annual Outreach Festival (56%F). However, the gender profile of participation varies in other major outreach events. We aim to have a better sight of the number of staff and students involved in</i></p>	<p><b>C13a:</b> Ensure, though guidance and reporting, that line managers discuss the contribution of staff to outreach activities at the appraisal meeting. Make it clear outreach is an enterprise activity that can help for promotion and career progression.</p>	HoS & Line managers & Director of Enterprise	Jan annually 2022-2025	<p>Contribution to outreach in SoBS is promoted and celebrated, and recognised in KEF and REF.</p>

	<i>the various outreach activities. It is also important to promote outreach as an important component for career progression.</i>	<b>C13b:</b> Introduce a school database on SharePoint for continued recording and monitoring by gender of all outreach activities involving staff and students.	CORE & EDIG	Mar 2022 to Mar 2024	Evidence-based knowledge of gender equality and broad representation of staff and students in outreach activities in SoBS in 2024, and new actions designed as appropriate.
		<b>C13c:</b> Ensure an accurate recognition of outreach activities when workload is allocated in JAM (see also action C18a).	HoS & DHoS (education) & Director of Enterprise	Apr-Jul annually 2022-2024	Time allocated to outreach activities is accurately recognised in JAM.
		<b>C13d:</b> Publicise the SoBS annual Outreach Festival via e-mail and the BioSoc Society to encourage our UG students to participate. Continue to award prizes to the best blog entries about the festival activities. Collate feedback from UGs about the festival's activities and design new actions as appropriate.	HoS & CORE & Directors of Programmes & EDIG UG champions	Oct-Nov annually 2022-2025	>75 UG students (gender balanced) participate and contribute each year to the school's Outreach Festival and provide feedback to improve the activities. UGs' best blog entries rewarded.
<b>C14.</b> Bullying and harassment and inappropriate behaviour are tackled effectively in SoBS.	<i>Our new measures allowed us to reach 88% (87%F, 90%M) confidence in the bullying/harassment reporting process in 2021. We aim to strengthen our measures to ensure SoBS remains a safe and collegial</i>	<b>C14a:</b> Implement a communication plan to increase awareness of bullying and harassment and the University gender equality policies and communicate about any updates.	HoS & EDIG	Jan 2022 to Jan 2025	>90% satisfaction with how bullying and harassment are tackled in SoBS as evidenced in 2023 and then 2025 SoBS culture surveys.

	<i>workplace for all staff and students.</i>	<p><b>C14b:</b> Develop guidance for all staff and PGRs explaining lines of contact for reporting bullying / harassment, the Report + Support tool and what will happen if they report. This guidance will make it clear that SoBS has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying and harassment.</p>	HoS & EDIG	Mar 2022	<p>&gt;95% awareness of policies related to gender equality in the 2023 and then 2025 SoBS culture surveys.</p> <p>Gender equality policies and guidance for all staff and students explaining lines of contact for reporting bullying / harassment, and what will happen if they report, included in the SoBS handbooks and available in SharePoint and EDIG webpage.</p>
		<p><b>C14c:</b> Ensure guidance and links to the University Report + Support tool and Harassment Contacts and University gender equality policies are included in the Staff and PGRs handbooks and made available on the EDIG webpage and updated as appropriate.</p>	EDIG	Apr-Jun annually 2022-2025	
<p><b>C15.</b> Students and staff feel they belong in SoBS and perceive the school as an inclusive work and study environment.</p>	<p><i>93% (87%F and 95%M) of staff and 88% of PGRs (85%F, 100%M) agree SoBS is an inclusive environment. We aim to use our learning from the COVID-19 pandemic to continue our efforts in</i></p>	<p><b>C15a:</b> Maximise inclusivity of events organised in SOBS post-COVID-19 by ensuring they are organised in a hybrid form (in-person + virtual) and recorded.</p>	HoS	Sep 2022 to Sep 2025	<p>All staff and students feel they belong in an inclusive school in SoBS 2023 and 2025 culture surveys.</p>

	<i>making SoBS a place where everyone feels included.</i>	<p><b>C15b:</b> Develop guidance including providing support to event organisers to facilitate hybrid forms by making the technology tools available and providing a budget for speaker fees and catering.</p>	HoS	Sep 2022	<p>Events re-established post-COVID-19 as hybrid when possible, and all staff and students are included, and technology and financial support available to organisers.</p>
		<p><b>C15c:</b> Ensure continued inclusion of technical staff at the SoBS research and teaching away days and include a session at these events where the STM presents a review of their contribution to education and research and identify areas where the school can improve support for their activities, training, and professional development.</p>	HoS & STM	Jan annually 2022-2025	<p>Satisfaction with the hybrid format of events and increased attendance as compared to in-person format.</p> <p>Contributions and achievements of all staff and students valued in HoS weekly digest emails and online on SoBS and EDIG webpages.</p>
<p><b>C16.</b> Increased awareness of mental health support available in SoBS and University.</p>	<p><i>We have consistently promoted healthy work-life balance and promoted good mental wellbeing. We have wellbeing officers for PGRs and staff. ~83% (86%F, 79%M) of staff and 85% (82%F, 100%M) of students</i></p>	<p><b>C16a:</b> Ensure, through guidance and monitoring, that all line managers complete the Solent Mind Mental Health Awareness training and include new actions as appropriate to ensure full uptake.</p>	HoS	Sep 2022 to Sep 2024	<p>100% of line managers take up Mental Health Awareness training by 2024.</p>

	<i>are happy with the support for mental health and wellbeing in SoBS 2020 culture survey. Feedback shows that COVID-19 has affected Staff and PGRs mental health. We aim to enhance awareness of support available through SoBS and University.</i>	<p><b>C16b:</b> Ensure, through guidance and reporting, that line managers support staff and students who struggle and encourage them to enrol in the SoBS mentorship and make it clear that wellbeing is a central theme in the program.</p>	HoS	Sep annually 2022-2025	<p>&gt;50% uptake of the mentoring programme by line managers in 2025.</p> <p>&gt;90% awareness and satisfaction of the support provided for mental health and wellbeing in the 2023 and 2025 SoBS culture surveys.</p>
		<p><b>C16c:</b> Ensure contact details of wellbeing officers and links to information about SoBS and University support provisions for mental health and wellbeing are included in the Staff handbook, available on the EDIG webpage, and continuously communicated via e-mail.</p>	EDIG & HoS & Wellbeing officers	Sep-Oct annually 2022-2025	
<b>C17.</b> Increased support for work-life balance and wellbeing in SoBS.	<i>81% of staff (83%F) 83% of PGRs (82%F) agree their line managers support them to obtain a healthy work-life balance and wellbeing, in 2020 SoBS culture survey. We aim to build upon our measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work-life balance and wellbeing to improve our support to build</i>	<p><b>C17a:</b> Develop guidance ensuring all school meetings continue to be held during the core hours, and that Fridays remain meeting-free.</p>	HoS & EDIG	Jan 2022	<p>All meetings are organised during the core hours, and recorded</p> <p>Fridays remain meeting-free</p>
		<p><b>C17b:</b> Develop guidance ensuring all school meetings are held in a hybrid format, recorded, and made available to everyone via e-mail and SharePoint.</p>	HoS & EDIG	Jan 2022	<p>A clear communication flow of teaching activities for all staff and students.</p>

	<i>a more inclusive workplace for all staff and students.</i>	<b>C17c:</b> Introduce a weekly digest e-mail focussed on communicating key updates and guidance about school's education activities.	HoS & DHoS (education)	Sep 2022	>85% of staff and students agree that healthy work-life balance and wellbeing are supported in SoBS, in 2023 and 2025 culture surveys.
		<b>C17d:</b> Ensure, through guidance and reporting, that line managers hold a discussion during the appraisal and PPDR meetings on the support needed by staff to improve their work-life balance and wellbeing.	HoS & Line managers	Jan Annually 2022-2025	
<b>C18.</b> Gender equality in workload allocation.	<i>In 2019/20, we introduced a new Job Allocation Model (JAM), which is continuously amended where issues are reported during the appraisal process. However, our preliminary analysis of 2019/20 and 2020/21 data revealed that women are more likely to be overloaded than men. It is important to conduct a thorough equality impact assessment of JAM to ensure gender equality in workload allocation.</i>	<b>C18a:</b> Perform an equality impact assessment of JAM and redistribute work ensuring gender equality and that issues related to fairness in workload allocation reported during appraisal are addressed.	HoS & DHoS (education) & Senior Line Managers	Apr-Jul annually 2022-2024	Staff reporting via appraisal fair allocation of admin, teaching and research tasks by gender and career stage.
		<b>C18b:</b> Ensure workload for part-time, returning from family leave and probationary staff is monitored and adjusted as appropriate.	HoS & DHoS (education) & Senior line managers	Apr-Jul annually 2022-2024	>90% of all staff agree workload in SoBS is manageable and fairly allocated, in 2023 and 2025 culture surveys.