

# Athena Swan Steering Group

## 2026 Terms of Reference

### 1. Introduction

The Monash University Athena Swan Steering Group provides strategic guidance and leadership for the University's gender equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives. Established in 2016, the Group supports the development, implementation and evaluation of the evidence-based initiatives, reinforcing Monash's commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable academic and professional environment.

The Steering Group plays a central role in progressing against objectives of the Monash University's *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2022-2030* and the *Gender Equality Action Plan 2026-2030*, underpinned by the Inclusive goals of the University's *Impact 2030* Strategic Plan.

### 2. About Athena Swan

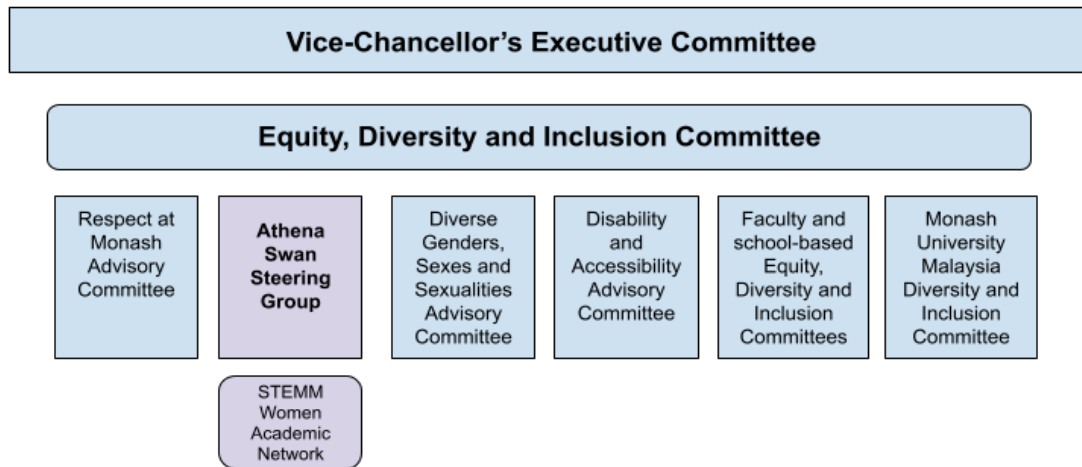
Athena Swan is administered by Science in Australian Gender Equity (SAGE), Australasia's leading advocate for equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the education and research sector. While initially focused on STEMM disciplines, Athena Swan now emphasises intersectionality within a broader EDI agenda.

Monash University joined the Athena Swan program in 2015, achieved Bronze level accreditation in 2018 and implemented a robust Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan between 2018 and 2022. In 2025, Monash received the SAGE Athena Swan Silver Award, a prestigious, world-respected accreditation recognising an institution's progress towards greater equity, diversity and inclusion. The program's internationally respected accreditation process involves cycles of self-evaluation, action planning, implementation and measurement.

For more information about Athena Swan at Monash: [monash.edu/gender-equity/athena-swan](https://monash.edu/gender-equity/athena-swan).

### 3. Governance Structure

Monash University Athena Swan Steering Group reports to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee. The EDI Committee is a steering committee reporting to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Committee (VCEC).



#### 4. Purpose

The Monash University Athena Swan Steering Group (the 'Steering Group') is tasked with promoting and advancing gender equality, diversity and inclusion across the University. The Steering Group plays a pivotal role in demonstrating the institutional commitment to data-driven approach that accelerates transformative change.

By identifying barriers to attraction, retention and progression for staff, and enhancing equity in policy, systems, structures and processes, the Steering Group intensifies the University's efforts in fostering broad and intersectional gender equity, diversity and inclusion; and advancing inclusive workplace culture.

#### 5. Terms of Reference

The Athena Swan Steering Group will:

- Oversee the University's SAGE Athena Swan pathway from Athena Swan Silver Award to Gold Award.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan (2026-2030), actively champion the Athena Swan principles to drive positive change and promote inclusive workplace practices through an intersectional lens.
- Coordinate the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, focus groups and consultation activities to identify challenges, barriers and opportunities that will inform evidence-based action planning and progress made.
- Implement evidence-based interventions that progress gender equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Oversee, monitor and report on progress of Athena Swan-led evidence-based actions and initiatives
- Provide consultation and/or advice on matters relating to gender equity, diversity, and inclusion, including but not limited to policies, processes, programs and initiatives to inform decision-making and support best practice.
- Provide a platform for stakeholder engagement and information sharing, supporting faculties in identifying barriers to equity and inclusion, developing targeted strategies, implementing initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality and inclusive culture.
- Oversee and support the STEMM Women Academic Network, through a sub-Steering Group.
- Demonstrate sector leadership in gender equity, diversity and inclusion externally.
- Provide regular updates to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and serve as a channel for communication with senior management on gender equity matters as well as diversity and inclusion more broadly.

## 6. Procedures

- The Steering Group comprises a Chair, an Executive Officer, ex officio members and appointed members.
- The Chair is appointed by the EDI Executive Sponsor in consultation with the Director, Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and is formally provided with an agreed workload allocation.
- The Chair is appointed for two years with the option of reappointment.
- All ex officio memberships will last for the duration of their appointment.
- The Steering Group may co-opt members as required.
- Other individuals may be invited to attend meetings as guests or observers, at the discretion of the Chair.
- The Steering Group will meet four times per year or as required.
- The quorum for meetings is one third of the membership rounded up to the nearest whole number.

## 7. Membership

The Steering Group shall include:

### Ex-officio members:

- Chair
- Director, Staff Equity Diversity and Inclusion
- Chair, STEMM Women Academic Network
- Monash University Malaysia representative
- Monash Graduate Association representative
- Chairs of Faculty Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committees, or faculty representatives:
  - Art, Design and Architecture
  - Arts
  - Business and Economics
  - Education
  - Engineering
  - Information Technology
  - Law
  - Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences
  - Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences: Biomedicine Discovery Institute
  - Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences: School-level representative
  - Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
  - Science
- Senior Advisor, Staff Equity Diversity and Inclusion

Additional members: will be invited to join (by the Chair) to promote representation from all levels of the academic community, striving to achieve:

- a gender diverse membership with diversity of perspectives, experiences and career stages; and
- cumulative experience to include career interruptions, caregiver responsibilities, working part-time, employed on different types of contracts, recent experience with recruitment or academic promotion.

Replacement of a member will be by invitation from the Chair in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

## **8. Executive Support**

Executive support to the Athena Swan Steering Group is provided by Staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Monash HR

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

Terms of Reference will be subject to annual review.