

Case Study

University of Limerick Human Resources Division – Athena Swan Project 2015



Project Background The University of Limerick (UL) was established in 1972 as the National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick and became a university by statute in 1989. UL offers a range of programmes up to doctoral and post-doctoral levels in the disciplines of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Business, Education and Health Sciences, Science and Engineering. UL has a proud record of innovation in education and excellence in research and scholarship. Its mission is to promote and advance learning and knowledge through teaching, research and scholarship in an environment which encourages innovation and upholds the principles of free enquiry and expression. Particular attention is paid to the generation of knowledge which is relevant to the needs of Ireland's continuing socio-economic development. The University of Limerick is an independent, internationally focused university with more than 12,000 Students and 1,400 Staff.

MAPS were engaged by the Human Resources Division to gather and analyse data on Staff, Leave and Recruitment in order to provide the University with the information required to apply for the Athena SWAN Bronze award.

Athena SWAN is a scheme which recognises a commitment to supporting and advancing women's careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine (STEMM) in higher education and research. The Athena SWAN Charter has been developed to support a commitment to addressing the underrepresentation of women in STEMM, and advancing the careers of women in STEMM research and academia. The charter covers academic roles, progression of students into academia and the working environment for all staff. Athena SWAN grants bronze, silver and gold awards to organisations who can demonstrate increasing levels of good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women in STEMM in higher education.

Project Objectives

- Gather and Analyse UL data on Staff, Leave and Recruitment
- Match data tables to Athena SWAN requirements
- Provide data to UL to enable them to apply for Athena SWAN Bronze Award

Project Deliverables

- Final Report
- Named data tables, with original Excel data
- Data required for Athena SWAN application
- Final Presentation to Athena SWAN Co-Ordinator

Athena SWAN members sign up to the six principles of the charter.

- To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action from everyone, at all levels of the organisation
- To tackle the unequal representation of women in science requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation
- The absence of diversity at management and policy-making levels has broad implications which the organisation will examine
- The high loss rate of women in science is an urgent concern which the organisation will address
- The system of short-term contracts has particularly negative consequences for the retention and progression of women in science, which the organisation recognises
- There are both personal and structural obstacles to women making the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career in Science, which require the active consideration of the organisation

Methodology MAPS met with the Athena SWAN Co-Ordinator and were presented with the Athena SWAN requirements for the Bronze Award. MAPS then ran a series of Business Intelligence reports to extract the relevant data for analysis, including Leave (all types), Recruitment Information (competitions, applicants, and successful candidates), and Appointment and Promotion history.

MAPS carried out a detailed analysis on the data and mapped the in the UL hierarchy with the data when required.

The resulting data was then categorised into Academic Research Staff and Support Staff, and grouped into STEMM. The data was also grouped according to the University Grade structure.

MAPS then carried out an analysis of STEMM Staff as a proportion of overall University Staff.

MAPS produced a series of pivot tables in order to present that resulting data in line with Athena SWAN requirements.

Key Outcomes The Athena SWAN Project resulted in the University of Limerick developing and submitting a successful application for the Bronze Award.

MAPS produced a detailed report on the outcomes of data analysis, and presented this to the Athena SWAN Co-Ordinator. The report included a series of pivot tables aligned with Athena SWAN requirements, a detailed explanation of how the tables were derived, and the original Excel data for future use.

The data was used as the basis for the development of a full application for the Athena SWAN Bronze Award.

MAPS made a final presentation to the Athena SWAN Co-Ordinator.

Reference / Testimonial

Marie Connolly, Athena SWAN Co-Ordinator, HR Division, University of Limerick.

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Management and Professional Services Ltd – Company Profile

Management and Professional Services Ltd (MAPS) is a Galway based company that focuses on providing high quality services and solutions to a broad range of customers both nationally and internationally. MAPS' customer base includes many public sector organisations as well as clients from private industry and the company strives to create and maintain long term successful relationships with clients.

Through strategic links in place with industry leading vendors, MAPS can deliver an array of consultancy and advisory services based on best practices, best of breed technology, best value and most importantly best fit based on a deep understanding of business. As an organisation, the company goal is to excel at providing objective advice on established and quality assured best of breed technologies and business solutions. MAPS' reputation for delivering unbiased advice is founded upon the premise of having the requisite experience and expertise across a broad range of disciplines.

MAPS have extensive experience with both public and private sector organisations in the areas of Project Management and Implementation; Business and Process Analysis; Process Mapping and Process Re-Engineering; Process and Workflow Improvement; Change Management; Human Resource Management; Service Level Agreements and Key Performance Indicators; Post Project Review. MAPS' broad expertise derives from having delivered many successful projects ranging in scope, and across many disciplines over the past 12+ years.

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