Student survey summary 2019

We would like to thank all students who took part in the 2019 survey and we were delighted to have achieved completion rate of 86% from Rowett PhD students.

We are pleased to learn that 84% of the student community are aware of Athena SWAN in the institute and 60% of students were made aware of Athena SWAN in the institute through the newsletter. It seems that students find the newsletter a useful source of information.

More than 80% of students are satisfied with their position as a research student and have a good working relationship with their supervisor with 1 or 2 disagreeing with these statements.

Most students do not have a career advisor and most indicated that a career advisor would be appreciated. However, ~50% of students indicate they are receiving advice on career development from their supervisors.

Responses indicate students are unsure or do not think that there is good support for making the transition from postgraduate to a postdoc position or career outside academia. Some comments indicate more workshop would be welcome particularly informing or promoting careers outside academia. This is relevant as more than 40% of respondents indicated they will be pursuing a career outside academia or did not yet know. Workshops are run by Early Career development workshop (Nvision) in IMS and these are widely promoted internally by several routes including our Athena Swan newsletter. We would therefore encourage students to read the fortnightly newsletter. Future questionnaires may be required to determine if these are attended and are relevant and if not, what would suggestions there might be for future workshops.

60% of students thought that there was good networking among students or between students and staff. A couple of comments suggested networking opportunities could be improved.

While the students thought that hard work, a supporting environment and inspiring supervisor were important factors for a successful career in academia, 4 thought that gender was an important factor with 11 more neutral on this issue. This would suggest that more is required to assert the equality of opportunity in science. Students who may be put off a career in academia, research funding issues was the most likely reason with short contracts and no job security as second and third reasons cited.

The STEM seminars are of value to the students, with 40% of respondents thought the STEM speakers promoted equality in the institute and 2 indicated that this has helped them think about their own career development.

Recently the family support award was opened up to PhD students and many students thought this helped to improve the equality culture in the institute. If this is relevant to you (both male and female PhD students) we would strongly encourage you to apply for this money; the fund has been largely undersubscribed and therefore there is a good chance of being successful.