

DAS Athena SWAN Case Studies

The following case studies provide an overview of some of the staff and students in our Department, including members of the DAS Athena SWAN SAT team.

Professor Jenny Ames

I joined the Faculty in September 2012 as Associate Dean (Research and Innovation). I was previously Associate Dean for Research and Innovation and then Associate Dean for Innovation at Northumbria University (2009-2012) and prior to that Director of Research at Queen's University Belfast (2005-2009). I hold a First Class Honours degree in Food Science from the University of Reading, a PhD in Flavour Chemistry from London University and several professional qualifications. In my spare time I enjoy cooking, teaching myself to play the saxophone, reading, walking in the country, continuing to explore Bristol and a wide range of music. I am married (husband recently retired) with no children.



I am currently Associate Dean with responsibility for Research, Innovation and Partnerships. I also lead on Research Impact across UWE. The role is broad and includes, for example, preparations for the REF, supporting staff at the beginning of their research career, business and public engagement, continuous professional development, educational partnerships, consultancy, playing a lead role representing UWE in regional health networks. My research involves the chemistry of components responsible for food quality. I am especially proud of the Faculty Research Career Support scheme we introduced in 2013 to help less experienced researchers to reach their potential.

Dr Tim Craig



I went to a rather mediocre state comprehensive school in Worcestershire, however I somehow ended up studying Biochemistry at the University of Oxford. Wanting to avoid being institutionalised and in need of a change, I did my PhD in the University of Liverpool, although I returned to Oxford University as a postdoctoral researcher for 4 and a half years with Professor Dame Frances Ashcroft on neonatal diabetes. Wanting to escape again, I took a job as a postdoc in Prof Jeremy Henley's lab at the University of Bristol, where I was given the freedom to develop my own research. In early 2015 I applied for and was offered the job of Senior Lecturer in Physiology at the University of the West of England. I am married with 2 small children. My whole family loves living in Bristol, so the post at UWE was ideal for me. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to forge a career in this city.

I currently teach on several different modules across the Healthcare Science and Biomedical Sciences courses. I lead five modules in Healthcare Science (Physiology), on the Respiratory Physiology pathway. My research is on Glucose Homeostasis and Type-II Diabetes, and I have just been awarded a Wellcome Trust Seed Award in Science to start this project. I have several collaborators in UWE, and I have found the academic staff here to be very friendly and helpful, and always willing to discuss research.

I have been very well supported starting my new role at UWE. As my previous jobs have all been mainly research-focussed, I have had to learn a lot of new skills and there have been many people here to help me at every stage, both in an official and in an informal capacity. I have found the staff here very friendly and it has been easy to settle in to my new environment. In terms of equality, it became very apparent to me early on how much better the gender balance is at this Department than at any of my previous places of employment.

Professor Myra Conway

I was appointed as a Senior Lecturer for DAS over 11 years ago and have since been promoted to Associate Professor and subsequently Professor in Biomedical Science. Previously, I had a lecturing position at the University of Brighton and was a Research Fellow at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, USA. I was awarded a first-class honours degree in Biochemistry and a Ph.D. in Clinical Biochemistry at the University of Galway, Ireland.



In my current role I direct a research team, which has six PhD students, one Professional Doctorate, a Research Placement student and four undergraduate project students. The research focus is on understanding fundamental pathways that are dysregulated in Alzheimer's disease (AD) and also on the development of early diagnostics to differentiate between subjects with mild-cognitive impairment and AD. My research and collaborative projects have attracted over 1.8 million in research funding that includes 14 Vacation Bursary Awards, which gives a unique research experience to undergraduate students. I have served as external examiner for degrees in Biomedical Science at several Universities' and also on PhD degree panels. I act as Associate Editor and reviewer for several high impact journals and also contribute to external research agendas in my field, including the Health Integrated Team on Dementia, the ARUK network and more recently as research advisor for BRACE. The department has supported me in taking on these external activities. I am also Chair of the University Human Tissue Sub-Committee, where we oversee the correct use and storage of human tissue. Over the last few years I have taken part in the Women's Research Mentoring Scheme, which has been a very positive experience.

Currently, I lead Clinical Biochemistry and Blood Sciences, which are quite interactive modules. I was nominated for student-led teaching awards in 2012 and 2013 and short-listed for the inspirational teaching award in 2014. I have a passion for teaching and believe in promoting opportunities that will enhance student learning and career progression. Over my 11 years I was very much involved in Level 1 and Level 2 teaching and have had the pleasure of mentoring many great students.

Throughout my career I never noticed any gender bias and feel I have been supported by the department. However, I have observed that at certain stages of career progression there is a gender difference in approach to promotion. I believe UWE is aware of these differences and through mentoring schemes aims to address these issues. My mentors in the USA were very talented, confident women and excellent role models. Here, at UWE, we have strong female leadership and I have found them very supportive. I have two wonderful children, both of school age, where I am the primary carer during the week. Balancing work and parent responsibilities is demanding and at times can be tough. However, the flexible working policies and trust by my managers in my work ethic has enabled me to have full engagement with the kid's activities. This is truly a superb aspect of working at UWE. My understanding is that this is also true for primary carers of dependents.

Alison Halliday

I graduated from UWE in 2003 with a biomedical science degree (which included a placement year). I started working at UWE straight after my degree in the September of 2003 as a full time senior technician, assisting with Nuclear Science labs and a molecular biology research lab. In 2008 I took on the role of Radiation Protection Supervisor for the department and lab manager of the Nuclear Science research lab. In 2011 I also took on the responsibility of Radiation Waste adviser for the university.



I am married with two young children. Both children are at the nursery based on site. I have been very pleased with the nursery and it is lovely to have them so local to where I work. My husband up until very recently worked in Reading/Swindon which meant I was the main child carer during the week. In 2012 I went on maternity leave with my first child and was able to take 9 months off. Cover was provided for my role while I was away. On my return I requested to change to shorter working week which was met very positively and I was able to drop to a 30 hour week. This was provided on a rolling year basis to trial the situation. In 2014 I went on maternity leave again this time taking the full years allowance. On my return I was asked if I wanted to stay at a 30 hour week and have started the process to change my contract permanently.

Within my primary role as Radiation Protection Supervisor I support all work using radioactivity within the department. I am also a member of the research technical team which helps to support the wide range of research going on in the faculty. This mainly deals with health and safety issues and as well as training and technical support within a molecular field. I also support the teaching technicians and help to run a few undergraduate practical's a year. As a member of the Athena SWAN group I feel they have an active grasp of the Athena SWAN charter. Throughout my time at UWE both working and as a student I have always felt very supported in my role as well as supported in my requests for a work life balance.

Dr Antony Hill

I was appointed as Associate Head of Department for Forensic, Analytical & Chemical Sciences in October 2015, following a Senior Lectureship in Physical Science at the University of the West of England (2012-2015) and Lectureship in Mathematics at the University of Nottingham (2008-2012). The Department's proactive and flexible support of individual career development has allowed me to rapidly expand my expertise and leadership experience (originally within mathematical science) into multiple fields including Forensic Science and Healthcare Science.



As an Associate Head of Department I support a team of academic staff in feeling they get the most from their roles and development, as well as providing strategic leadership. I'm passionate about teaching, and continue to oversee the development and delivery of innovative blended-learning programmes designed to provide opportunities for students to engage with the applied sciences from a diverse variety of backgrounds. My research background is in the mathematical modelling of real-world problems, which has included projects from environmental & biomedical science and renewable energy. This feeds into my teaching by being able to demonstrate real-world application of theory, but also in the ability to impart enthusiasm on the topic.

In my role I interact regularly with a large number of staff throughout the Department, which has a supportive and collegiate atmosphere. As a gay man I have never encountered any form of prejudice and always felt free just to be myself. Personally, I believe this is the definition of equality. The flexible and supportive work arrangements have allowed me to successfully manage my numerous work-related responsibilities with my well-being and home life. This is realised by the autonomy, and crucially trust, I'm given in balancing my intense work-related periods with those of relaxation. The University's continued support for the blended-learning innovations I oversee (which require considerable up-front development) is a reflection on its commitment to providing real opportunities for students that need different types of work/life balances.

Josie Phillips

Upon completion of my undergraduate degree at UWE (2011-2015), I was offered a PhD scholarship to continue studying here. When I chose my course in Conservation Biology I'd been very impressed by UWE's diverse nature and commitment to promoting women in STEM subjects. During my undergrad, UWE supported my decision to take a placement year and conduct challenging field research on a nocturnal primate in Indonesia. Through this experience, I came to know many inspirational women working in the field, who fuelled my desire to pursue a career in research. I am so pleased that UWE has given me the opportunity to develop further as a young scientist and continued to support my research in Southeast Asia.



My PhD research focusses on the tropical ecology and conservation of Southeast Asia's rainforests. More specifically, I am looking at the environmental consequences of the conversion of rainforest to oil palm plantations. Palm oil is the greatest threat to global biodiversity, but also found in a wide range of everyday items and food products. I want to develop a novel management technique that can improve the environmental outlook of oil palm plantations, making them more sustainable and better for wildlife. As part of my training, I also get the opportunity to teach undergraduates and work with the public, most importantly this allows me to promote my ideas and research to a wider audience.

I do not feel that there is any obvious unequal gender representation across my department. In the years that I have been here, I have seen a number of women stepping up to more senior academic roles. Currently, I am the only female working within my research team. Unfortunately this is often the case with tropical fieldwork. However by supporting me, both academically and financially, as I study for my PhD, UWE has clearly acknowledged such a gender gap in this area of research and has actively taken steps to bridge the divide. On this basis, there is no doubt in my mind that UWE is seriously committed to addressing inequality and recognising the talent of individuals regardless of gender.

Jan Richardson



I joined the university in 1994 to work in the Business School, having had 10 years management experience in the financial sector but without any formal qualifications. During my time at UWE, I have raised two children, and had responsibility as primary carer for three elderly parents living with Alzheimer's, Dementia and Motor Neurone disease.

As a senior member of the Executive team, I am responsible for the administrative and professional service requirements for the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences. I act as the interface between the

Faculty, Departments and Professional Services across the University. This includes driving change initiatives, raising quality, innovating and enhancing business processes, adding value and securing cost and efficiency savings.

I have had the opportunity to undertake part-time study based on experiential learning and gained a Postgraduate Certificate in Management Studies. This enabled me to contribute to strategic initiatives at both the Faculty and University level. The flexible working policies enabled me to be responsive both as parent and a primary carer to emergency situations that can ultimately compromise the work life balance. In the last six months I have had coaching sessions that enabled me to build confidence and develop and enhance leadership skills.

Dr Clare Wilkinson

I arrived at UWE in 2006 after a PhD at the University of Plymouth and a Research Fellow role at the University of Exeter. My background is in the social sciences and I found the Department and research group that I work in to be welcoming and open to the idea of multi-disciplinary working. I am married and my husband is also in a demanding career. Due to family responsibilities and the location of my husband's employment, I live outside of Bristol and am able to benefit from flexibility around working hours outside of timetabled teaching, which is supported by my line manager.



In addition to my involvement with Athena SWAN, I am a programme leader working over two postgraduate science communication programmes offered at UWE. I'm also involved in delivering continuing professional development to a range of individuals and groups, both online and face-to-face. My research interests are largely in public and informal research engagement, and I have been funded by various organisations and funding agencies. Over the last two years I have written a book (with a colleague) for Manchester University Press and found the Department to be supportive in allowing me the time to do this.

I have personally benefitted from a number of the schemes offered at UWE to assist staff in their development at a Departmental, Faculty and University level. Most recently I took part in the Women Researchers Mentoring Scheme, which I used as an opportunity to consider my future progression and promotion plans. Shortly after this mentoring I was able to seek additional advice from senior colleagues around promotion, attended a HR workshop on the promotion process, and was appointed to Associate Professor in 2014. I find colleagues, despite demands on their time, to be very friendly, cooperative and approachable.