

SWAN APPLICATION: School of Pharmacy, Queen's University |Belfast
Letter of endorsement from the Head of Department

To whom it may concern:

As Head of the School of Pharmacy at Queen's University Belfast, I am delighted to support our application for the SWAN Bronze award.

The School of Pharmacy at Queen's is widely recognised as one of the leading pharmacy schools in the UK and returned a strong performance in RAE 2008. In the National Student Survey (NSS) for 2011, Queen's achieved the highest overall mean percentage satisfaction score of all UK Pharmacy Schools.

The School is focused on training the pharmacists of tomorrow, with almost 600 students, the majority female, studying for the MPharm degree, accredited throughout the UK. Our female members of staff are major contributors to the School's achievements and to its distinctive ethos: open, transparent and collegiate, with a strong sense of identity amongst both staff and students. In a recent 'wellbeing' survey, Pharmacy met all long-term national targets and had the highest scores in all categories of any part of this university.

As a growing and dynamic unit, the School has changed rapidly in recent years. Many new appointments are now being taken by young, enthusiastic and talented female staff from the UK and internationally. The Queen's Gender Initiative women's mentoring scheme helps us ensure that this staff group is given every opportunity of being the academic leaders of the future. Our two most recent academic recruits have been female: a Lecturer and Reader. One of our two Directors of Research is female, and during our last Promotions round (2010/11), a female was promoted to a personal Chair.

Our female staff members provide role models to which our existing and future female students can relate, as talented and committed professionals taking forward our quality agenda in education and research. Similarly, those of our female staff who are pharmacists provide direction and leadership to the profession at local and national level.

As Head of School, I recognise, along with our management team, that female staff may need particular support at various times during their career as they cope with the inevitable issues of the life-work balance. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that no female member of staff will ever be disadvantaged as a result of issues such as childcare, maternity leave or related family matters. Our recently completed survey distributed to all academic staff, post-doctoral fellows and PhD students highlighted these as important issues for females. Our action plan identifies the further steps that we are taking in what is an ongoing process of review. This is not simply about SWAN,

though. The reality is that we simply cannot afford, as a unit, to lose the capabilities, energy and drive in education and research brought to the School by our female staff

I believe, as Head of School, that the SWAN Bronze award would be a wonderful recognition of the enormous contribution that female academic staff at all levels are making, and will increasingly continue to make, to the Queen's School of Pharmacy as a leading centre for the science and practice of pharmacy throughout the UK.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Woolfson', written in a cursive style.

Professor David Woolfson

Head of School
School of Pharmacy
Queen's University Belfast.

November 21st 2011