

Elected Academic Staff (Non-professorial) – College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

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Dr Kate Ash-Irisarri

School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

I am seeking re-election as an academic member of Senate. Over my previous term, I have worked to contribute constructively to Senate's core responsibilities, including maintaining the quality and standards of our teaching and research. A particular focus of my service to date has been governance effectiveness. I served as a member of the External Review of Senate Task and Finish Group, and am currently involved in the short-term working group on Delegation of Senate Authority, which seeks to define a general framework for managing and delegating Senate's decision-making processes. To both of these groups, and the wider Senate, I bring a commitment to transparency, clarity of remit, and efficient and effective procedures. It is my belief that Senate must operate in ways that are rigorous but agile, ensuring that decisions are well-scrutinised without becoming unnecessarily remote from the academic community it serves. If re-elected, I will continue to advocate for processes that are accessible, clearly communicated, and subject to appropriate scrutiny. I believe strongly that Senate has a responsibility not only to safeguard academic standards but also to model the principles of the wider community it represents; this includes fostering meaningful representation and cultivating an environment in which myriad voices and perspectives are genuinely heard and respected. I remain committed to ensuring that Senate's work is evidence-informed, strategically aligned, and exercised with rigorous oversight so that members of the University can have confidence in the decisions taken on their behalf.

Dr Michael Barany

School of Social and Political Science

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Not eligible for early career positions (Grade 09 or above)

I am standing for re-election for a third term to continue efforts to help Senate better fulfil its responsibility for the university's academic work, driven by and accountable to the university's working academics. In my first two terms, I have:

- Actively participated in Senate meetings and consultations, including extensive work behind the scenes to attempt to make these more effective and accountable.
- Organised informal meetings, briefings, and online discussion spaces for elected Senate members, which have helped elected members to understand issues, develop interventions, and participate effectively in formal meetings.
- Collaboratively led and supported elected Senate member responses to timely concerns, and generally supported members to navigate Senate processes and be heard, whatever their views.
- Facilitated communication between elected staff and students on Senate to build mutual understanding and identify common priorities.
- Served three years on the Senate Quality Assurance Committee, ensuring elected members' interventions received a voice in QA governance.
- Developed reforms to make Senate decision-making more accountable and to limit mechanisms for management to bypass Senate oversight. This includes reforming the Senate Exception Committee, which provides accountability in exceptional time-sensitive situations, on which I will continue to serve if re-elected.

My teaching, research, and knowledge exchange are nationally and internationally recognised. As Senior Lecturer in the History of Science, I bring to Senate particular academic expertise on international and global academic institutions; data, algorithms, and mathematical abstractions; and gender, race, and inequality in scholarship.

Dr Qu Chen

Edinburgh College of Art

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

As a Lecturer and Programme Director (MSc Landscape and Wellbeing, cover), and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, I am pleased to submit my statement in support of my nomination to Senate. With over fifteen years of experience in higher education, I hope to contribute my academic and international perspectives to Senate's work.

My experience spans teaching, programme leadership, and institutional service. I recently convened a panel on Inclusive Learning and Teaching at an international university's Teaching Forum. I previously served as an International Officer at the University of Cambridge and currently act as Early Career and Mentoring Officer and Prize Officer for research groups within a Royal Society. Since the pandemic, I have also collaborated with the United Nations on Sustainable Development Goals related to education, inequality, health, and digital rights, offering insight into aligning the University's Strategy 2030 with global priorities.

Within the University, I serve on ESALA's Education and Academic Committees and lead research projects on artificial intelligence and the rights of socially vulnerable groups. Many of the students and staff I teach or supervise come from international and diverse backgrounds, giving me valuable insight into building a more inclusive learning and research environment.

If elected, I would promote three priorities: advancing inclusive learning and assessment, strengthening collaboration between digital development and student support to enhance digital literacy, and integrating research theory and ethics education, with attention to data equality and inclusive research practices, while supporting a more open, collaborative, and globally engaged academic community.

Dr Eder Coelho Paula

Moray House School of Education and Sport

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

With a decade of experience across the educational sector—from primary teaching in Brazil to my current role as an Associate Tutor at the University of Edinburgh — I strongly believe I bring a unique, global perspective on pedagogy, curriculum development, and academic support. My work has centred on creating inclusive, engaging learning environments and advocating for equitable access to education, particularly in STEAM and digital literacy.

If elected, I will contribute this practitioner’s insight to Senate discussions, ensuring the voices of those involved in teaching and student support are heard. I am deeply committed to advancing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, informed by my work with diverse student bodies and my research on inclusive educational practices. I aim to champion policies that promote fairness, support early-career academics, and foster a university culture where every member can thrive.

I am ready to serve as an active, collegial, and representative member of Senate.

Dr Kirsten Cowan

Business School

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

I am an Advanced Senior Lecturer in the Business School with experience across teaching, research, doctoral education, and quality assurance. I am keen to serve on Senate.

My research and teaching focus on digital technologies, including immersive and VR environments, and I have a strong record of publication, grant capture, and industry collaboration. I have supervised several PhD researchers to completion, and regularly mentor PhD and early career colleagues. This gives me a grounded perspective on how University policies on research, learning and teaching, and doctoral training are experienced in practice.

Within the School and wider University, I have contributed to strategy, quality, and curriculum development as Joint Head of Year 4, Course Organiser for core research methods training, PGR representative for my subject group, and internal IPR panel member. I have also contributed to AACSB reaccreditation and co-edited a Teaching Matters series on “Engaging and Empowering Learners,” which aligns with Strategy 2030.

I am strongly committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. As a woman, first-generation university student, and immigrant, I am acutely aware of how structures, norms, and informal networks can unintentionally exclude or disadvantage persons. My efforts focus on widening access to development opportunities (e.g. workshops, reviewer training, conceptual writing events) and reducing barriers created by opaque processes, particularly for international, first-generation, and under-represented colleagues and students.

If elected, I would bring an evidence-informed approach, experience of educational innovation, a commitment to transparent communication, and a concern for high academic standards while safeguarding staff wellbeing and student equity.

Dr Kevin Donovan

School of Social and Political Science

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Not eligible for early career positions (Grade 09 or above)

I am a Senior Lecturer in the Centre of African Studies and have served two 3 year terms in the Senate. I think the Senate is a critical venue for re-asserting faculty governance of the university, particularly at this time. I have worked through Senate in a variety of ways to push back on austerity and its negative effects and unequal effects on learning, research. For instance, I worked with others to form a working group on 'Budget Resilience' which documented a huge range of consequences from budget cuts last year. I believe another such working group is essential. I have also been involved with efforts on student well-being and free expression. If re-elected, I would be keen to continue working across the University -- for which Senate is uniquely positioned -- on topics such as these.

Dr Darrick Evensen

School of Social and Political Science

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Not eligible for early career positions (Grade 09 or above)

I am a Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, Programme Director of the MSc in Global Environment, Politics and Society, and the PGT Academic Misconduct Officer in the School of Social and Political Science. I seek election to Senatus Academicus to contribute an independent, analytically grounded voice at a time when the university faces consequential academic and financial decisions.

My academic work focuses on governance, institutional legitimacy, and public trust. These perspectives have reinforced my belief that strong universities depend on transparent decision-making, meaningful consultation, and rigorous scrutiny of proposed changes. Senatus plays a vital role in ensuring that academic priorities and student well-being remain central to institutional decision-making and that staff perspectives are heard and reflected in the university's direction.

I bring substantial governance experience, including service on Senate and its Exceptions Committee, chairing the Cardiff University Research Staff Association representing over 1,000 fixed-term researchers, and four years as a Trustee of Cornell University. In this last role, I was voted against the university's annual budget (creating controversy in doing so) when I believed proposed restructuring risked undermining the academic mission. These roles have taught me that effective governance requires both constructive engagement and principled independence.

I would approach this role with a clear commitment to listening carefully to colleagues, representing their perspectives faithfully, and helping ensure that the university's academic values, integrity, and long-term strength remain at the centre of its governance.

Dr Rebecca Hewer

School of Social and Political Science

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Not eligible for early career positions (Grade 09 or above)

I am a Senior Lecturer (Chancellor's Fellow) in Sociology with a background in law and social policy. I am also a Co-Director of the University's gender and sexuality studies 'hub', GENDER.ED. I have been at the University for 14 years, as a Master's student, a PhD candidate, a precariously employed post-doc, and finally as a member of academic staff on an open contract. I have seen this institution from a variety of vantage points, and poured hours of care and labour into its reproduction. I continue to believe in its social, political, and cultural promise.

I have nominated myself for Senate as I believe I can (and very much want to) help represent the voices of academic staff. I think that, in this challenging institutional moment, it is more necessary than ever to amplify front-line perspectives. It is, I would suggest, in the day-to-day work of staff and students that the University is made – our input is vital.

I am particularly interested in working with colleagues to ensure that the University balances its commercial interests with a high degree of respect for the value systems informing excellent pedagogy and research, as well as the sustenance of vibrant communities.

As reflected in my leadership of GENDER.ED, I have a particular interest in promoting teaching and research that explores marginalised experiences and amplifies subjugated knowledge. This goes hand in hand with a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Inclusive practices must simultaneously be about who we are and what we do.

Dr Jakov Jandric

Business School

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Not eligible for early career positions (Grade 09 or above)

I am seeking re-election to the Senate in order to continue contributing to the academic governance of the University of Edinburgh. As a long-standing member of our University community, and mindful of the pressures facing colleagues and students, I am committed to supporting research and teaching through sustained and thoughtful engagement in Senate work.

Alongside my experience in the Senate to date, I bring a research portfolio focused on university governance, collegiality, and academic professional autonomy, as well as extensive research on student learning and the student experience. During my time in Edinburgh, I have contributed to major research grants and collaborative projects and have held a range of leadership roles, most recently serving as Programme Director for two MSc programmes. These experiences give me a grounded, day-to-day understanding of the challenges shaping teaching and research practices, and of the collegial effort needed to overcome them.

The University of Edinburgh is both my intellectual home and professional community, and I wish to see it thrive. As a member of the Senate, I will bring my knowledge and experience to the role and dedicate myself to safeguarding the principles of collegial integrity and academic rigour, to ensure that all members of our University have a meaningful voice in its governance.

Dr James Lamb

Moray House School of Education and Sport

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

Senate has a crucial role in ensuring that our University provides the conditions that support high quality teaching and learning. As a lecturer within Moray House and Edinburgh Futures Institute, my teaching and research concerns how we can conceive learning spaces that are equitable, convivial and in harmony with our natural world. This has carried over into University projects, including Futures For Our Teaching Spaces: Principles and Visions For Connecting Space to Curriculum, and the creation of hybrid teaching spaces within EFI. I would welcome the opportunity to bring this interest, and my wider work around assessment, feedback and teaching, to University Senate.

Having worked here at Edinburgh for 25 years, I know this to be a remarkable but also complex University. In contributing to Senate, I would draw on insights and strategies from teaching across MSc in Digital Education and MSc in Education Futures, and with experience of having performed the role of Tutor, Teaching Fellow, Course Organiser and Programme Director. Having also completed my Masters and PhD at Edinburgh, I positively experienced the University from a student perspective.

Before joining the University's academic community in 2015, I spent 13 years working at Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS), which emerged from a UoE initiative, and pioneered work to enable talented learners from non-traditional backgrounds to access then succeed within higher education. This is a value that continues to shape my work: our academic classrooms and communities are made richer through the inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives.

Dr Jennifer Lavoie

Moray House School of Education and Sport

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

We are at a key crossroads for the future of the University and advancing excellence in research and teaching while supporting staff and students through these times of transition is priority. I am keen to contribute to the Senate through providing a breadth of experience that comes from having held academic positions on three continents in the past eight years and bringing solutions-based ideas for enhancing our research culture and teaching environment. Having been Depute Head of Institute within my department, I am aware of recurring challenges that academic staff face on a daily basis: workloads, productivity, equity of opportunity, and staying motivated through challenging institutional transitions have been common issues raised in recent times. Solutions are often complex, but available. I will bring this solutions-focused approach and mindset to my term on the Senate as we collectively navigate our pathway forward to strengthen the University's uncompromising commitment to cutting-edge research with impact, creative and high-quality teaching that launches the next generation of students into meaningful careers that address societal challenges, as well as enhancing the University's structural policies and culture for upholding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Dr. David Levy

School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

I've been at UoE for over twenty years, so I bring institutional memory, experience of change, and a lot of experience of teaching. I also worked in industry for a decade—in finance and IT—so I bring a perspective very often lacking in discussions. I know why I'm at UoE, because I had other choices, which means I am clear-eyed about and committed to the value an institution like UoE can bring to students and to society. In Senate, I would move those values to the fore in setting our direction. For a good part of my time here I was on fixed-term or part-time contracts, so I understand well the pressures associated with working at UoE in those capacities. I would hope to speak for colleagues in similar situations. The majority of changes during my time at UoE have not been for the better and I would like to join Senate so that we can more forcefully articulate the costs and consequences of ill-considered changes based on priorities that are foreign to the core values of higher education at UoE.

Dr Jingyi Li

Moray House School of Education and Sport

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Not eligible for early career positions (Grade 09 or above)

I am standing for Senate because I believe that our commitment to academic excellence is most effective when it embraces equity, inclusion, and global relevance. Serving on the Senate, I aim to foreground student and staff experiences when shaping our academic strategies as we navigate the evolving challenges in UK higher education.

Through my extensive experience in teaching, academic leadership, and student experience enhancement, including roles as Course Organiser, Programme Director of a large PGT programme, and currently Senior PGT Tutor, I have developed a nuanced understanding of how institutional policies shape everyday academic experiences across the student lifecycle. Working closely with professional services colleagues and supporting students facing complex circumstances, I have gained particular insight into the transitions and challenges experienced by international students and those who are racialised, minoritised, or marginalised. These insights position me well to advocate for policy changes that strengthen our academic environment.

If elected, I will contribute to enhancing learning and teaching that are rigorous, research-informed, inclusive, and transformative. I will champion educational practices that value students' diverse intersectional identities, engages meaningfully with ongoing work on decolonisation and embedding wellbeing in curriculum, and prepare graduates not only with disciplinary expertise but also with critical consciousness and a strong sense of social responsibility.

I also recognise that delivering high-quality education fundamentally depends on staff experiences. I am committed to advocate for sustainable workloads, professional development, and innovation, which are essential for maintaining the ethical and intellectual standards expected of a world-leading university.

Dr Stephen McDowall

School of History, Classics and Archaeology

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Not eligible for early career positions (Grade 09 or above)

I am a Senior Lecturer in History who joined the university in 2012. I have held a number of teaching, administrative and leadership roles within the School of History, Classics & Archaeology over the past 14 years, and have significant experience supporting international students at all levels. My teaching and research centre around historical anti-Asian racism, expertise that sadly became topical again during the COVID-19 crisis, and remains vital to understanding our current political and social context. I would welcome the opportunity to bring my experience and institutional knowledge to Senate, as we face what is likely to be a difficult time for staff and students.

Dr Kate Orton-Johnson

School of Social and Political Science

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Not eligible for early career positions (Grade 09 or above)

I would like to join the Academic Senate because I care deeply about how decisions made at the highest-level shape the everyday experience of staff and students. I believe that academic governance should be principled, transparent, and rooted in the lived experience of our community. I am particularly interested in working with colleagues to ensure that all staff and students have a strong voice in the ongoing transformation of the University. I believe that senate should be a space that guides strategic priorities, ensuring that teaching and research remain ambitious, inclusive, and forward-thinking, shaping a vision and academic direction that defines our university.

I am a sociologist and have acted as a Programme Director in the School of Social and Political Science and Director of Education in EFI, this disciplinary lens and these roles have impressed on me the importance of a governance culture that is reflective, accountable, and responsive to the realities of our academic community. I would bring to the senate experience of working in a complex interdisciplinary space and an ability to work collaboratively and creatively. I would also bring a strong commitment to teaching, seeking to contribute to debates around meaningful assessment and feedback, curriculum development, academic support and protecting the time that excellent teaching requires. I am committed to constructive dialogue, respectful debate, and finding practical solutions that serve the whole University community.

Mr Alex Owens

Moray House School of Education and Sport

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

I believe we all care about the University of Edinburgh, its academic standards, reputation, and integrity, and that the University's staff and students are the core representation of this. Whilst the current environment can feel turbulent and uncertain, I feel strongly that genuine commitment to the values set out in Strategy 2030, with a focus on bold, relevant and diverse ideas, is the foundation to continued teaching and research excellence and an institution we are proud of.

As a current Teaching Fellow on UG and PG programmes, a Course Organiser, and Programme Director of a PG degree, I am routinely delivering a diverse range of teaching and learning activities that are student and teaching staff-facing, whilst also leading programme and institute work for wider School and College initiatives that requires regular presenting, discussing and debating with academic heads of schools and academic services heads of department. Recent work has also included substantial redesign of an entire degree programme and creation of associated new courses, leading degree accreditation recognition with multiple domestic and international governing bodies, and creating funded study and employment routes for domestic and international students by collaborating with local internal and external organisations.

As an early career academic staff member, I would welcome the opportunity to join the Senate to advocate at a University level for the work, views and ideas of similar colleagues, in conjunction with more senior and varied stakeholders, to enable teaching and research that is truly bold, relevant and diverse.

Dr Kane Oxholm-Abry-Diaw de Baye

School of Law

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-Professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

I am Kane Abry (Edinburgh Law School). I am a practising lawyer and academic with experience spanning higher education, legal practice, and government, including senior roles in the Scottish Parliament and the UK Civil Service.

Within the University of Edinburgh, I have worked as an hourly paid tutor, seminar leader and lecturer, and until recently served as Tutors' Representative, working closely with the Head of School and senior colleagues to improve teaching delivery, assessment, staff support, and widening participation.

Alongside this, I hold programme leadership responsibilities at another institution, giving me a practical, systems-level perspective on academic quality, student experience, and the realities of implementing change across complex organisations.

If elected, I would bring to Senate a focus on: (1) high-quality education and fair assessment, grounded in evidence-informed enhancement and robust quality assurance; (2) supporting staff who teach, including professional development, workload realism, and clear routes for constructive feedback; and (3) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as an operational priority, not an aspiration, embedding inclusive design, addressing attainment gaps, and ensuring that policy and practice advance equality of opportunity in a proportionate and transparent way.

I am committed to collegial, solutions-oriented governance and to ensuring Senate decisions translate into better outcomes for students and staff.

Dr Ileana L. Selejan

Edinburgh College of Art

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

I am submitting my candidacy for Senate out of a desire to assume an active role in university governance and to participate in overseeing our teaching and research activities. I believe that access to education is a human right, and that universities have an essential role to play within society. Due to global as well as national challenges, since the higher education sector finds itself under increasing pressure, we must work harder than ever to preserve our core values and to ensure that we maintain the highest standards in terms of promoting equity and sustainability. I wish to champion EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) values with a focus on intersectionality, building upon my own perspective as a disabled woman from an ethnic minority and an economically underprivileged background. I was born during the Ceausescu dictatorship in Romania and came of age during the so-called “transition period” during the 1990s. My academic journey began at age 18 when I left my country on a scholarship to pursue my undergraduate studies in Western Europe, completing a PhD in Art History at New York University in 2014. Since then, I have been active in various research and teaching roles at universities from across Europe, the US, and in Latin America. I am an interdisciplinary multilingual scholar with a profound appreciation of all academic disciplines, and a firm believer in the enormous power that we yield as a collective working in close collaboration to address the most difficult challenges of our times.

Dr Heidi Smith

Moray House School of Education and Sport

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Not eligible for early career positions (Grade 09 or above)

I actively encourage criticality and reflexivity in all areas of my work with a focus on intersectionality. Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are central to my teaching and research. I have facilitated leadership of intersectionality in Education, specifically Outdoor and Environmental Education (OEE) locally and internationally in a range of ways e.g., Academic Lead Hybrid Learning and Teaching; Programme Director; Institute Representative Equity, Diversity, Inclusion; Editor in Chief International Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education; member Intersectionality in the Outdoors Network; committee member International Outdoor Education Research Conference. I have personally demonstrated a strong nexus between research and practice throughout my Higher Education career, through critical pedagogical praxis, transculturality, and intersectional issues (e.g., gender) in a range of contexts (outdoors, indoors and online).

I am committed to student and staff experience through lifelong learning fueled by connections between university and the wider community. I achieve this through facilitating inclusive learning communities within and across courses, programmes, schools, the wider University and community beyond. These transcend current students to alumni and colleagues within and beyond the University. Relationships developed have resulted in research collaborations which enrich learning and teaching in coursework, PhD research, and publications. I moved to Edinburgh University for the specific reason to work with a diverse international student and staff community to transgress higher education and the OEE profession for EDI. I arrive at Senate with an open mind, criticality and accountability with commitment to transparent communication between students, colleagues, the wider profession and Senate as appropriate.

Dr Lena Wanggren

Centre for Open Learning

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

Eligible for early career positions (up to and including Grade 08)

I am standing for Senate, a second time, to work for decent working conditions, job security, democracy at work, and equalities, at our University. As a UCU trade union rep since 15 years, and long-term casualised colleague, I bring experience from not only our but also other Scottish universities where I have worked in a number of roles. As one of the many insecurely employed scholars at the University, I am acutely aware of the urgency in protecting staff working conditions and student learning conditions, including stopping staff and course cuts, and improving meaningful consultation with trade unions. Staff and student voices, including as expressed on Senate, in trade unions, and student unions, are often ignored - by joining Senate I will work to uphold a more democratic governance.

Currently working as Teaching Fellow (Centre for Open Learning) and Tutor (Literatures, Languages and Cultures), teaching courses on English Literature, gender studies, and feminist writing, I also serve as Director of EDI at Centre for Open Learning. I recently finished a UKRI/BA-funded project as Research Fellow in Geosciences, a project on marginalised casualised academics' unpaid and invisibilised labour.