Elected Academic Staff (Non-professorial) – College of Science and Engineering

Candidates are listed in alphabetical order

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Dr Matt Bell

School of Biological Sciences

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I am standing for my second term on Senate. During my first term, I contributed actively to discussions in Senate on multiple occasions. I used my experience as College Academic Misconduct Officer for CSE to question University leadership about their understanding of the impact of AI on student learning; I used my experience as an external examiner to challenge the logic of the proposed changes to exam boards; and I used my extensive teaching experience to counter claims about the impact of major change projects on the student experience. I have represented Senate for two years on the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee, using insights from my roles as CAMO and member of the University Appeals Committee to help develop rigorous, humane and pragmatic regulations.

In November 2025, I was elected as Non-Professorial Senate Assessor to the University Court, with a term that runs until July 2030. In my first attendance at Court in December 2025, I highlighted the severe risks that the planned cuts pose to research and teaching. I intend to continue to present Senate's views to Court in a firm, critical manner but also to work to improve communication and transparency in both directions.

I have felt extremely honoured to represent my colleagues on Senate and at Court, and feel that I am finally beginning to understand enough about how things work to be able to really use both fora effectively.

Dr Alejandro De Coss Corzo

School of GeoSciences

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I am standing for Senate to actively contribute in discussions and conversations regarding the academic direction and priorities of the University of Edinburgh. I believe this is particularly pressing given the major undergoing and proposed changes to the University's structure, everyday operation and long-term status. The University cannot lose sight of its academic mission in pursuit of purely financial considerations, to the detriment of staff, students, and the city of Edinburgh.

I bring to Senate experience in organising and advocating for stronger staff involvement in key decision-making spaces. This is most visible in my active role in the University and College Union, but it is also part of my activities at the Institute of Geography and the Lived Environment, where I am a Lecturer, and involved in various student- and staff-facing roles and activities. I am conscious of how decisions made regarding the overall direction of the University impact different groups of students and staff members unequally, and I am committed to find ways to not only integrate this in our strategies, but to make sure that active measures that ameliorate them are translated into actions. This is all the more pressing in this moment of change, where we must ensure that the University remains a place of learning for all.

Dr Daniel Fosas de Pando

School of Engineering

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

My work focuses on creating, maintaining, and retrofitting buildings that are great to live in and aligned with the climate agenda. This has spanned diverse built environments, from non-domestic buildings on campus and domestic buildings across the UK to shelters for displaced populations worldwide. Throughout, my approach has been collaborative, working with building users and owners alongside subject experts and organisations across multiple fields.

I currently serve as one of two PGR Advisors for the Research Institute for Infrastructure and Environment and on the People & Culture Committee in the School of Engineering, roles that aim to cultivate a supportive and inclusive environment for PGR students and staff. Building on my experience in EDI and STEM, these have strengthened my understanding of University operations, the practical challenges facing staff and students, and positive actions that can be taken here. I believe these will be valuable as the institution evolves, with attention to what change means for the community.

In addition, my involvement with the Scottish Engineering Advisory Board, and my contribution as Deputy Theme Champion for Energy Efficiency in Buildings within the Energy Technology Partnership in Scotland (now SPEERI), have broadened my experience of governance, policy, and the sectoral challenges and opportunities closely linked to the Scottish context.

Overall, I believe these experiences and the values underpinning them will enable me to contribute to Senate deliberations with a collaborative, people-centred, and informed perspectives that represents and contribute to the needs of our students and colleagues.

Dr David Garcia Cava

School of Engineering

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I am honoured to be nominated for election to the University of Edinburgh Senate. Having worked closely with colleagues and students across different roles, I care deeply about how our University makes decisions and how those decisions shape everyday academic life. I would welcome the opportunity to represent staff and contribute meaningfully to Senate's work.

Through my service on the Staff Development Committee, Student Innovation Advisory Committee, and Curriculum Renewal Committee, as well as in my role as Cohort Lead in the School of Engineering, I have seen first-hand the dedication of our staff and the ambitions of our students. These experiences have given me a practical understanding of both the opportunities and pressures within our academic community, and a strong appreciation of the complexity of university governance.

If elected, I would approach Senate with a collaborative and open mindset. I believe in transparent, evidence-informed discussion and in creating space for constructive challenge. Senate should reflect the diversity of our community while balancing academic tradition with thoughtful innovation and rigour.

For me, equality, diversity and inclusion are about people feeling heard, valued, and able to thrive. They should shape how we work together and how decisions are made. I will listen openly, represent colleagues thoughtfully, and work towards outcomes that are fair, inclusive, and forward-looking.

It would be a privilege to serve the University in this role.

Dr Fraser MacDonald

School of GeoSciences

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I seek Senate nomination because I believe in academic-driven governance and scrutiny in an era of executive managerialism. Recent turbulence in our sector has shown that the Senate is critically important to maintaining the university's credibility and standing. It's over a year since Senate warned of the risks posed to our academic mission, our sustainability, and our international reputation from the current executive's approach. These risks remain acute. In this context, I'm standing less as an expert in governance than as an ordinary teacher and researcher, concerned that the changes we make to secure our long-term finances don't diminish the things we value most.

I'm an historical geographer and essayist working in the School of Geosciences. Although I'm a humanities scholar, science is my main object of enquiry: from histories of astronautical engineering to those of soil science. My writing is often aimed at informing public debate. For instance, a widely circulated 2023 essay in the London Review of Books took issue with Senate changes that aimed to neutralise the UCU marking and assessment boycott. I now want to help steer discussions rather than merely comment on them.

I have previous experience as a member of the Arts Faculty Board at the University of Melbourne where I was Senior Lecturer. At Edinburgh since 2010, I have designed and taught courses at every year, undergraduate and postgraduate, with a particular passion for experiential learning, field teaching and supporting neurodivergent students.

Dr Sean McMahon

Role split between Schools

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I am a mid-career academic (Reader) in the School of Physics and Astronomy and the School of GeoSciences. My organisational experience and interests may be gleaned from the following. I run a medium-sized, well funded research group (4 PhD students, two postdocs) while also managing a laboratory, directing a taught MSc programme (for which I am course organiser for three courses), and co-directing a research centre. I have served on a variety of School committees and was a member of Senate previously from 2020–2022. The good governance of universities is a special interest of mine. I am Deputy Chair of the Council for the Defence of British Universities (CDBU; patron Lord Williams of Oystermouth), a national campaigning organisation founded in 2012, which focuses on university governance, academic freedom, accessibility, EDI in teaching and research, and other related issues. In this capacity I recently helped organise an event at the House of Lords to launch CDBU's Code of Ethical University Governance. I am also proud to be a UCU member.

Dr Nathan Medd

School of Biological Sciences

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I am an early-career lecturer who has been part of the University of Edinburgh community for twelve years, first as a student and now as staff. Throughout this time, I have been on the front line of teaching, from demonstrating and short-term teaching contracts during my PhD to my current lecturing role, alongside an active research programme. This dual perspective shapes the experience I would bring to Senate: a clear view of how high-level decisions affect day-to-day teaching and research.

I have been involved with UCU and engaged with staffing matters, which has given me insight into workload, job security and morale across different career stages. I believe decisions about organisation and policy should be guided by integrity, clarity and respect, and that our ambitions as an institution must be matched by a realistic commitment to supporting the people who deliver our core academic work.

I am particularly committed to the collegiate nature of academic life. The University's reputation and impact rest on the everyday efforts of many hard-working colleagues who routinely go beyond their contracted duties. Governance should recognise and support this by enabling Schools and subject areas to function as strong academic communities, rather than weakening them through excessive centralisation of administration or an overly commercial view of our work.

My teaching and curriculum design are strongly informed by a commitment to equity in further education, including work on decolonising the evolutionary biology curriculum. I am proud of Edinburgh's traditions and international outlook, and, if elected to Senate.

Dr. Siddharth N

School of Informatics

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I'm standing for senate membership to help support colleagues, both staff and students, in ensuring the effective running of the primary business of the university: teaching and research.

Given the remit and responsibilities of the Senate, I hope to be able to contribute to its functioning by finding consensus and building support for all measures, including such as EDI and governance; particularly holding senior management to account over their mismanagement of university finances, poor decision making and priorities with regard to staff, and their attempts to evade or ignore scrutiny and accountability with regard to the Senate's considered decisions and recommendations.

Dr Stefanos Papanicolopulos

School of Engineering

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

“Why isn’t anything going on in the senate? […] Because the barbarians are coming today.”

Despite Cavafy’s pessimism, Senate has recently been pushing back against changes affecting the University’s academic mission. I am keen to be involved, and contribute, to this effort. As an academic at the University for the past thirteen years, and currently as the Convenor of the Board of Studies for the School of Engineering, I have witnessed the centralisation of many aspects of our academic life, and the issues this keeps causing. Through Senate, I welcome the opportunity to try countering this one-size-fits-all trend, strengthening the role of Schools and of individual academics.

Dr Andrea Paterlini

School of Biological Sciences

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

As a teaching-focused Lecturer, I would bring to the Senate a perspective that is complementary to that of our research-intensive colleagues. My day-to-day work is firmly embedded in the student learning experience, ranging from designing and delivering curricula to supporting colleagues in pedagogical innovation. I serve on the School of Biological Sciences' Learning & Teaching Committee as one of the Associate Directors of Teaching. The committee oversees the quality, breadth and relevance of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching within the School. I also sit on the University Appeals Committee and serve as a Board of Examiners Convenor. These roles give me detailed knowledge of regulations and the real-world issues that students and staff encounter. Externally, I am the Gatsby Plant Science Mentor for the University of Edinburgh and the Deputy Chair of the Early Career Lecturers in Bioscience, an advisory group to the Heads of University Biosciences (within the Royal Society of Biology). These positions keep me connected to sector-wide developments and provide a network through which I can benchmark Edinburgh's practice. EDI underpins all my professional activity. I have published on building more inclusive and diverse scientific communities, wrote an open letter to a past Government on the matter, sit on a diversity-focused research-award panel, and continually advocate for inclusive pedagogies. If elected, I will champion evidence-based, student-centred policies, strive for transparent governance, and ensure that the diverse voices of our teaching and research communities are heard in the highest academic forum of the University.

Dr David Quinn

School of Mathematics

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I have worked for the University since 2015. I coordinate tutor induction and the local EdTA scheme, and convene the pre-honours Board of Examiner's in my School. In 2025 I covered a semester as Board of Studies convener. I was previously an elected member of Senate serving 2023-25.

I'm keen to return to Senate. I trust that many of our colleagues will be strong representatives for the needs of the academic community, so I don't worry of the outcome of this vote. I am consistently impressed by the passion of our colleagues on Senate. My term in senate gave me great insight into the procedures and the unfortunate limitations of the position. I want the experience and voices of those in junior positions to be heard. These voices run in parallel to the future of positions I'm currently proud to hold.

Our university is in period of reflection. It is trying to understand the value of different contributions, and how we can generate efficiencies. I believe I have created some with undergraduate progression, but have been met with silence outwith my school. I'm open to understanding how we can improve from a bottom up, rather than top down, perspective. It is the only academics who can define the academic need.

To those reading this, even if skipping ahead, I ask that regardless of outcome you keep informed of Senate business, and speak to your Senate representatives. Action will always bring us closer to our academic vision than silence ever will.

Dr Santiago Romero-Vargas Castrillon

School of Engineering

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

Dear colleagues, I am a Senior Lecturer in Chemical Engineering. Please consider supporting my nomination for non-professorial membership of the Academic Senate representing our School. If elected, I will speak in defence of our job security and wellbeing, and firmly oppose the cuts eroding our academic standards. The School of Engineering deserves strong and principled representation at this critical time.

Dr Amer Syed

School of Engineering

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

Experience: I have been at three different universities in UK as a student as well as an academic. I bring in experience in organisational matters related to the delivery of core university services, student support matters and exceptional circumstances policy and implementation.

Contribution to Senate: I am currently degree programme manager of Mechanical Engineering, academic lead and contact of student led innovation groups (in particular student groups engaged in designing and building projects such as Formula Student), member of Timetabling and Course Selection Group. I would be able to bring my experience in the areas of Learning and Teaching, Student Experience and to some extent Quality Assurance related matters and contribute to discussion and debate at the Senate along with being a link between the School I represent and the Senate.

Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: As a member of BAME community, I bring my lived experience to the senate and its working and promote EDI in all facets of university life

Dr Jonathan Terry

School of Engineering

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I am currently the Head of the Graduate School within the School of Engineering. This involves overseeing nearly 600 PGR students within the School, as well as involved me in administrative matters at the College level. I would like to be considered for nomination to the Senate in order that I can better understand the future strategy and priorities related to postgraduate research across the wider University and to enable me to play a role in determining how the College of Science and Engineering and the School of Engineering can contribute to these plans going forward. I was previously a Senate member between 2020 - 2023.

Dr Matjaz Vidmar

School of Engineering

College of Science and Engineering

Academic staff (Non-professorial)

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

I have been part of The University of Edinburgh community since 2011, starting with an undergraduate degree in Physics, to holding a Lectureship in Engineering Management.

I am especially keen to join the Senate at this crucial moment when we need to advocate to protect our academic community from significant threats from the corporativist culture dominating academia.

Working with a number of close colleagues, who have been instrumental in Senate's recent push-back against the false narrative of economic ruin of the past few years, I stand ready to advocate for a new approach to university management that moves away from investment-driven cost-cutting and short-term navel-gazing, to consider the real and immense challenge of the political and economic impact of the climate crisis, global inequality and the next phase of digital (AI) transition.

This is both my research and pedagogical interest, as well as something I am supporting as trustee of a number of education-related charities, so I am looking forward to bringing my passion and experience to the Senate.