

Academic Staff Member Election 2020

Fiona Mackay, Professor of Politics

I wish to be considered for the office of Academic Staff Member on the University Court. I am an adult returner to Higher Education and a graduate of this University (PhD). I've held several teaching, administrative and research leadership positions in the University and the wider academic field, including as Head of the School of Social and Political Science (2014-17), Graduate School Director, deputy head of politics and international relations, research group convenor, and academic mentor. I am currently director of genderED – the University's new interdisciplinary hub for gender and sexuality studies. Externally, I also serve as Trustee and Honorary Secretary of a UK learned society, the Political Studies Association. I was recently awarded fellowship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (FRSE) and am a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences (FACSS).

I am deeply committed to the idea of Higher Education as a public good, and of The University as a vehicle for personal, social and economic change. From training the next generations of practitioners, academics and critical citizens to the undertaking of research and innovation that can help address global challenges and local concerns, the University plays an important role in making a positive difference. I am proud of the University of Edinburgh's leadership and achievements in these regards but am also clear-sighted about its weaknesses and blind spots, and the distance still to be travelled, including around equality, diversity and inclusion.

The role of Academic Staff Member is to represent the University as a whole rather than a particular School or subject. My nomination has attracted signatures of support from colleagues from across the three Colleges (representing 17 Schools and Institutes) which attests to my reach across the University, and my interdisciplinary collaborations and networks.

This is a time of considerable challenge for the HE sector. In this context, I would be honoured to serve the community through a role as Academic Staff Member on Court. I believe my experience at UoE and beyond will equip me to contribute substantively to discussions on vision and strategy, identify the needs and opportunities for change, and to give an informed view of the likely impacts of these changes, both positive and negative, on the staff and student experience. I would strive to make issues of equality, diversity and inclusion central to these agenda.