

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2020

Sarah McAllister

Since joining the University of Edinburgh in 2005, I have progressed my career in various roles, in Schools and in Professional Services. I started as a Postgraduate Administrator in Public Health Sciences (2005-2009), was seconded as Teaching Organisation Manager in the School of Chemistry (2008-2009), was Teaching Organisation Manager and subsequently Head of Student Services in the School of GeoSciences (2009-2017), and was Head of Operations and Projects, and Assistant Director, in the Institute of Academic Development (2018-2019).

Since 2019, I have been the Head of Student Support Operations in Student Systems and Administration, and in 2018, I was seconded to the Service Excellence Programme, acting as Programme Sponsor for the Programme and Course Information Management project. The University supported my development through a staff scholarship for a Master's degree in Education (Leadership and Management) while working full time.

In all of my roles, I have actively represented School, College, and Professional Services staff on University working groups, academic recruitment panels, Senate Committees (SQAC and APRC), the Student Disciplinary Committee and other forums not only for students, but also for professional services. I have used my experience and understanding to influence service, governance, and system changes. I have been responsible for the allocation of resources to support both teaching (classroom, laboratory, and fieldwork) and research (research council, industrial funding, alumni and endowment funds). I have extensive experience of supporting the student journey, including oversight of recruitment, transition, curriculum development, and academic progression, through to graduation, alumni and industrial engagement.

In my current leadership role, I am responsible for the Fees and Funding team, which oversees the collection of over £300m in tuition fees annually, and the Scholarship and Funding team, which strategically supports the University's widening participation goals of providing support to key cohorts of students (over £10m). I am also responsible for the incoming Extensions and Special Circumstances team, which will provide online support to our taught students, ensuring consistency in our provision, and to support Schools in providing high-quality student support. As Project Sponsor for PCIM, I regularly engage with key stakeholders from across the University to plan, procure, and implement a system that will support our current and future teaching provision.

The University has launched a strategic vision towards 2030 and beyond, to develop further as a world-class leader in teaching, research, and engagement with society. Like so many sectors, universities continually face uncertainty and change while responding to internal, sector, and global insecurities. There is an ongoing need to ensure that our systems, policies, governance, and staff culture are able to meet the challenges ahead. All of my leadership roles have given me a deep understanding of the needs of not only our students, but also our professional-services and academic staff. I believe that I can make valuable contributions to the high-level strategic

oversight that our University Court provides, by representing professional-services staff and supporting the University to meet its teaching and research mission through a strong understanding of our strategic objectives, governance, services, and roles.