

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024

Katie Nicoll Baines

I have been a member of staff at the University of Edinburgh since April 2017 and an Edinburgh resident since birth. I was initially employed as a research fellow in computational biology at the Institute of Genetics and Cancer. After learning more about careers in researcher development and researcher career support I transitioned in 2019 to a professional services role as a project manager (based in the School of Chemistry) for an EPSRC Inclusion Matters grant tasked with investigating barriers to career progression in the engineering and physical sciences. Alongside managing a complex interdisciplinary team, I researched, designed, and supported the implementation of interventions designed to make hiring practices more inclusive as well as a secondment with UKRI to understand barriers associated with accessing research funding. In 2022 I took on the role of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager for the Future Leaders Fellows Development Network, based in the Institute for Academic Development. This experience has enabled me to understand the complex nature of research careers and the challenges associated with improving research culture. I have developed strategic methods for approaching system change in complex organisations and recognise the importance of critical friends in shaping innovation. I have networked with colleagues across research support services and with researchers in a variety of disciplines within the University and beyond. I have retained links to my colleagues in the IGC and contribute to their Science Insights programme, supporting secondary school pupils to understand opportunities to study at the university and promoting the importance of inclusive research environments. I am also an experienced facilitator and training developer and regularly consult with research departments on their research design practices and am supporting development of inclusive research design principles at UKRI.

I think my transition from research to professional services staff gives me a unique insight into being a good professional services staff member. I understand the importance of working across these roles and how we must work in collaboration with equal recognition to ensure our success as a leading research institution. I have experience sitting on the University EDI committee through which I have gained insight into the breadth of work across our organisation beyond my extensive experience in the research environment arena. I have had the opportunity to collaborate with EUSA student representatives in my role as co-chair of the Staff Pride Network and contribute to initiatives and policy designed to foster LGBT+ inclusion at the University.

I am a champion for the importance of diversity and creating environments that foster belonging that enable people to thrive and contribute to the University. I also recognise the position of importance that the University holds in the city of Edinburgh and that we have a civic responsibility to the city that is our home. I believe my experience and ethos makes me ideally positioned to be a good professional services member for University court.