

## **Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024**

### **Owen Macdonald**

Owen Macdonald has held the position of GIS Support Officer in the School of GeoSciences since 2005. The role involves a mix of technical expertise, practical teaching, application of theoretical concepts, organisational skills and supervision of student research. Owen provides support primarily for a cluster of GIS and Earth Observation MSc programmes within the School, but also a listening and consultancy service to a variety of GIS users as well as closely working with IT to ensure software delivery and support to students and staff.

During his time in post, he has supervised numerous MSc dissertations, organised dissertation conferences, most recently in the form of an island-based fieldtrip, ran a nationally significant geospatial seminar series for 13 years, has contributed to a number of research projects and teaching initiatives, and has witnessed the often-significant changes in the geospatial sector over that time together with the corresponding response by the GIS/EO Masters programmes. He has also seen the nature of professional services strengthened and indeed professionalised over that period.

As a member of the school's professional services staff but outside of the core School teams such as IT, Teaching Organisation or Finance the role offers a unique insight into various aspects of university life and work at the academic-professional services interface.

As a member of the School's Athena Swan Committee Owen has contributed to the improvement of working conditions for colleagues, particularly in more marginalised or non-core areas. He has also taken part in many Learning and Development as well as technical training events to inform his practice including being a member of pilot and early cohorts on both the Edinburgh Teaching Award scheme and data science training via the IS Developing Your Data Skills programme alongside many different staff members and roles. Owen would relish the opportunity to apply some of these skills in a practical application, making a real contribution to the work of the University.

Owen is Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and the Royal Geographical Society and was twice nominated for a EUSA Teaching Award and for Exceptional Service by the Association for Geographic Information.