

Hugh Mitchell – Biography



On completion of my secondary education at Falkirk High School, and at the encouragement of my father, I did not pursue my initial ambition to become a Physical Education teacher but took up the offer to study Modern History at the University of Edinburgh. That led on to me starting as a Graduate Trainee in Human Resources with the energy company Shell 4 years later. Over the next 37 years I was fortunate to have had a successful career in one of the largest Public Companies in the world, spending the last 11 years as a member of the 8-person Global Executive Board. While my professional background is in Human Resources, my responsibilities, as Chief HR & Corporate Officer, expanded to include Real Estate, Brand & External Communications, Health, Security, and Aircraft, as well as HR.

While my responsibilities required me to be an effective leader in a range of Governance positions from Chair, and Executive Management, to roles of influence in a very large Corporation, perhaps managing the complexity, profile and external scrutiny, and long cycle nature of the business were the key learnings I took from that time.

2005 – 2016	Royal Dutch Shell plc	Chief Human Resources and Corporate Officer
	Regional Director - Africa Chairman of Shell Aircraft International Ltd Director of Shell International Ltd Director of Shell Petroleum NV	
2003 – 2005	Shell International BV.	Director International
1997 – 2003	Shell International Ltd.	VP Human Resources, Oil Products (Refining, Trading, Marketing, Retail)
1995 – 1997	Shell International Trading & Shipping Company	Human Resources Manager
1979 – 1995	Various HR roles in the UK and Brunei	

I have also led Shell's International Government Relations function with dedicated staff in the UK, Netherlands, Washington and Brussels. Holding regional responsibility for Africa and Scotland also gave me direct experience of dealing with a range of Government Ministers and Officials.

Throughout my career I have held assignments across the UK, Brunei, concluding with 13 years in The Netherlands. My roles in the last 20 years have all had global responsibility such that I have had the privilege (which I deeply value) of visiting over 100 Countries in the world and having worked closely with colleagues and built deep friendships from every Continent.

My career has coincided with one of the most turbulent periods in the energy sector and I found myself as a central player in the design and implementation of new organisational models and associated change processes as a result of globalisation, portfolio shifts as part of the transition to cleaner energy, and new technology. These shifts were hugely challenging and involved disruption to Governance structures, new expectations of leadership, and the need to take a workforce of over 100,000 committed professionals with us.

Despite the wide range of responsibilities and the scale of change, my most important contribution, as a HR professional, was in identifying, nurturing and building the professional and leadership capability of the organisation's people to reach their full potential. I believe that has a parallel with one of the core purposes of a University as it seeks, through its teaching and research, to build a society fit for today and the future. It is for that reason that I have committed significant personal time to being involved in the governance of Secondary Schools, Business Schools and Universities over the last 20 years across the UK, Europe and the USA. That includes:

2020 - Present	Court Member and Remuneration Committee Chair, the University of Edinburgh
2015 - Present	Guest Lecturer, London Business School
2014 - 2022	Vice Chair and Remuneration Committee Chair, Edinburgh Business School
2005 – 2015	Member of the Board of the Centre for Advanced Human Resources at Cornell University, Ithaca, USA
2005 – 2015	Foundation Board member of IMD Business School, Lausanne, Switzerland
2000 – 2006	Member of the Governing Council for the UK National College for School Leadership

Following my executive career my principal focus has been on the University of Edinburgh. I have been a Member of Court for over 5 years. During that time, I believe I have demonstrated that I can effectively Chair key Committees as well as being a committed and impactful contributor to the Committees I am part of, and Court itself. I consider that I have the confidence of Court colleagues and provide constructive support at a personal and collective level to the Executive Leadership of the University.

My other area of focus is Chairing the Board of the Port of Cromarty Firth (2018 - date), which is pivotally positioned to be the main Scottish hub for Floating Offshore Wind developments. As well as being central to the Country's net zero ambitions, these

developments are key to creating skilled jobs for young people in the Highlands of Scotland.

I also served on the Board of a FTSE 100 Insurance Company for 6 years, developing a valuable insight into Financial Services.

2018 - Present

Board Chair, the Port of Cromarty Firth

2012 - 2018

Non Executive Director and Remuneration Committee

Chair of RSA plc