

Academic Staff Member Election 2026

Sue Fletcher-Watson

This is a time of change, distress and tension – around the globe but also for our University community. As well as the impact of financial targets, specific issues include implementation of the Race Review, ensuring safety and inclusion for our trans and non-binary community members, navigating the divestment agenda, and delivering our sustainability goals. There's a need for coalition-building and prioritisation of collective resources to meet these challenges while continuing to enrich our education, research and innovation. This is what I hope to be a part of, as a member of Court.

I have worked at the University of Edinburgh since 2010, joining as a Postdoctoral Fellow in Moray House School of Education and Sport, and later moving across Colleges into the Division of Psychiatry as a Chancellor's Fellow. I am now a Professor of Developmental Psychology in the Centre for Biomedicine Self and Society and the Dean of Equity, Inclusion and Community for the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

What that string of department names and job titles tells you is that I have experience working in multiple parts of the University and that my research and teaching is inherently interdisciplinary. I have over a decade's experience as a charity trustee, including at Scottish Autism, and founded local charity *SuperTroop*. The common threads in all my work have been a dedication to inclusive coproduction with end-users, and a track record of translating insight into action. I will bring the same commitments into a Court role.

In my term, I would be guided by three priorities which I think are pivotal right now:

First, a focus on the people at the heart of our University, shaping our position in the city, the nation and on the global stage. In conversations about business objectives and strategic vision, we have to keep sight of the students and staff who make all this happen. How do we keep them safe, respect their varied lives and contributions, and enable them to thrive? How do we engage their expertise as we improve our institution, and close the loop so they see how their ideas have had an impact?

Second, a commitment to collective and collaborative governance across the University's oversight bodies, namely Court, Senate and the Executive. These groups don't always work in concert, despite a shared commitment to excellence in teaching, student experience, scholarship and impact. I will use my voice to find ways to steward our University more effectively, together.

Third, a pragmatic approach. I'm comfortable with incremental steps in the right direction, with compromise and with negotiation. I know my values and will hold the line when I need to, but I won't let the pursuit of perfection prevent real action.

I would be proud to represent the academic community on Court, standing up for our collective expertise in creating and sharing knowledge. I look forward to working with fellow Court members to deliver a positive future for everyone at the University of Edinburgh.