



Chair of the Governing Board

Appointment brief

Scottish Association for Marine Science

Winter 2024/5

WELCOME

Dear Candidate,

We are looking for an experienced, well-connected and compassionate new non-executive chairperson to lead our charity into the defining next period of our 140 year history. Thank you for your interest in this position.

This document has been collated to showcase who we are, what we do, and how our board of trustees support us in working towards our ambitious goal: helping humanity re-define its relationship with the ocean for a healthy, diverse, productive and sustainable marine environment.

SAMS is a world-leading, mature and independent ocean science research and education charity, with 165 staff and 200 students at our campus outside Oban. As a founding partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands we play a pertinent role in growing the quality and reputation of research within the university and wider region, and contribute to the socio-economic development of the highlands and islands of Scotland.

We are well governed and managed, and have ambitious plans to grow. We are currently working on our 2025-30 strategy while simultaneously working on a SAMS 2050 roadmap to take a longer perspective. SAMS Board recently committed to having the ocean represented on the Board and we are actively exploring how this will work.

Please contact either of us if you are excited by the opportunity to lead our Board.



Prof. Nicholas JP Owens
SAMS Director
nick.owens@sams.ac.uk



Diana Murray
Chair of Board of Trustees
diana.murray@sams.ac.uk

Watch our chairperson recruitment video here: <https://www.aspenpeople.co.uk/sams/>

About SAMS

Established in 1884, SAMS is a world-leading marine and coastal research institution that addresses global challenges.

With a vision for a healthy and sustainable global ocean, SAMS is committed to pioneering scientific discovery about the marine environment and our relationship with it, disseminating that new understanding through inspirational education and public engagement, and providing expert solutions and advice about today's problems for governments, business and wider society.

SAMS researchers have backgrounds in natural and social sciences, technology and data science. They apply their expertise to the big societal challenges of our time, investigating biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change in the marine environment and developing increasingly sustainable solutions to meet human needs for food, energy, security, transport, health and more.

SAMS research extends from space to the deepest ocean trenches, works on scales from the molecular to planetary, and covers the global ocean from the North Pole to the Antarctic continent.



Why work with us?

What we do matters to the planet and society



Our location

Outstanding facilities and infrastructure. Culture Collection of Algae and Protozoa; Scottish Marine Robotics Facility and Scientific Robotics Academy; Seaweed farm, nursery and Seaweed Academy; Pontoon and research vessels; Research aquarium; Data visualisation suite; Research laboratories; Lecture and meeting rooms; Teaching building with STEM and visitor centre; On-site student hostel; workshops; Library; Podcast and film studio and more

Our People

Staff/fellows:

smart, diverse, committed, flexible, solution focused and collaborative

Board:

competent, constructive and supportive

Students:

enthusiastic, curious, imaginative and driven to make a difference

Community:

friendly and inclusive



Our Organisation

SAMS is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is registered as a charity with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

We deliver research, education and enterprise as equitable activities aiming to increase the health of the ocean and providing reliable evidence for good decision making.

SAMS is highly collaborative and values its partners: SAMS is a founding partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI); an Associated Institution of the United Nations University; a Delivery Partner of the UKRI-Natural Environment Research Council; a partner in the Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland and the Scottish Alliance for Geoscience, Environment and Society. It is also a subscribing member of the Estuarine and Coastal Sciences Association, the Challenger Society for Marine Science, the Marine Biological Association of the UK, the EuroMarine Network, EIT Food, and the Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean. Most recently SAMS became a founding member of the World Association of Marine Stations and joined the Association for Science and Discovery Centres. We work closely with Highlands and Islands Enterprise to develop the European Marine Science Park, and with Argyll and Bute Council.

SAMS operates two wholly owned subsidiaries: SAMS Enterprise and SAMS Ltd that operate in the innovation space, offering specialist services, products and access to SAMS infrastructure and facilities to clients including marine businesses, regulators, NGOs and governments.

During the 2020-25 strategy period SAMS introduced a development strand into our funding model.

We have an annual income of c £11M, For further information, please visit the governance tab on our website: www.sams.ac.uk/about/. To explore SAMS' board members, follow this link: <https://www.sams.ac.uk/people/>

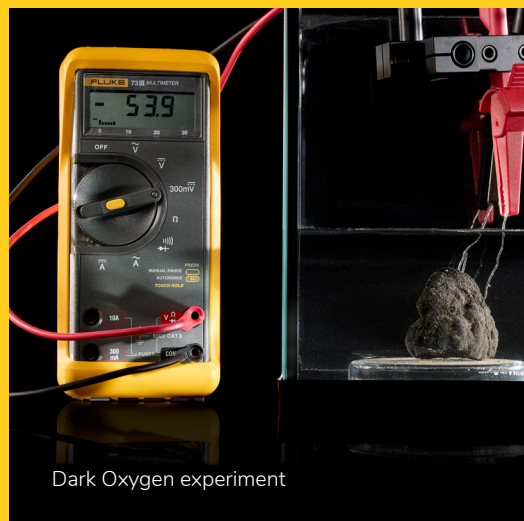


Some highlights from

2024

Deep-sea biogeochemist **Professor Andrew Sweetman** discovers Dark Oxygen Production on the abyssal seafloor: calling into question the origin of life on Earth and the possibility of life on other planets, and adding a new concern regarding deep-sea mining.

Dr Alison Cook's modelling study predicts that the Northwest Passage is unlikely to become a safe shipping lane between the Pacific and the Atlantic for many years due to release of thick, centuries-old ice.



SAMS physical oceanographer **Prof Mark Inall** becomes Chief Scientific Adviser to the Scottish Government.

A SAMS study makes the UK the first country in the world to have a map showing the distribution of 'blue' carbon stored in seafloor habitats. The report estimates that 244 million tonnes of organic carbon are stored in the top 10cm of our seabed.

For the past 12 months SAMS UHI PhD student **Gary Groves** has been monitoring Shetland's shellfish producing waters for toxic algae using a novel, AI-trained robot 'Imaging FlowCytobot'





Prof. Mike Burrows

For the fourth consecutive year, SAMS ecologist **Prof Mike Burrows** remains on the Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers list of the top 1% of cited researchers globally.

Dr Matt Davey contributes to the first satellite-derived map of photosynthetic life across Antarctica.

The UHI's postgraduate taught students were 100% satisfied with their studies for the third consecutive year (top in Scotland), while the BSc (Hons) Marine Science programme scored 92% overall satisfaction ratings.



Prof. Matt Davey in Antarctica

Prof Liz Cottier-Cook's brainchild, the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degree in Aquaculture, Environment and Society (ACES-Star) celebrates its 10th year of funded studentships.



SAMS UHI graduates



ACES-Star MSc graduate

Role description

What's involved

Position title: Chair of the Governing Board of SAMS

Position type: Voluntary (with reasonable expenses covered)

Time commitment: Approximately twelve days per year (excluding travel)

Start date: our current Chair reaches the end of her maximum appointment period in March 2025. We would hope to have a handover period and expect that the new Chairperson can join us by April 1st 2025.

Overview

The Chair of the Governing Board plays a critical role in overseeing the strategic direction of SAMS, ensuring that the organisation achieves its mission of advancing marine science for a sustainable future. As the leader of the Governing Board, the Chair works closely with the Board and Executive Team to provide leadership, guidance, and accountability, ensuring that SAMS remains a leader in all that it does.

This position is voluntary but provides a unique opportunity to influence marine science on a global scale, collaborating with top scientists, policymakers, and institutions.

Key responsibilities

Leadership and governance

- Provide strategic leadership to the Governing Board and ensure the effective governance of SAMS, demonstrating and implementing best practice governance principles and process
- Lead the Board in setting the long-term strategic vision and objectives of the organisation

Financial oversight

- Ensure the Board is effective in monitoring the financial health of the organisation, and making sure SAMS adheres to financial best practices

Board management

- Chair Board meetings and support the recruitment of new board members to ensure a diverse, skilled, and effective governance team
- Foster an environment of transparency, collaboration, and accountability within the Board
- Ensure that Board members are aware of and fulfil their governance responsibilities
- Serve as an ex-officio member of governance committees

Strategic direction

- Work alongside the Chief Executive and senior leadership team to ensure SAMS achieves its strategic objectives
- Help drive the long-term vision for the organisation to be a leader in the international and national marine science and innovation community
- To align SAMS goals with the needs of its range of international and local stakeholders

Fundraising and advocacy

- Represent SAMS at high-level events, conferences, and forums, promoting the importance of marine science and SAMS' role in the field
- Build relationships with government, academic institutions, businesses, and potential donors to support SAMS' mission

Stakeholder engagement

- Serve as a key ambassador for SAMS, building strong relationships with stakeholders in government, academia, the private sector, and the public to advance the work of the organisation

Risk management and compliance

- Ensure SAMS complies with all relevant legal, financial, and ethical standards
- Provide strategic guidance on risk management to safeguard the reputation and sustainability of the organisation

Key attributes and skills

Strategic vision: Strong understanding of the landscape of research, sustainability and policy in a scientific or related field

Leadership experience: Proven experience in leading organisations or boards, with a track record of effective decision-making, governance, and fostering collaboration at senior levels

Passion for the environment: A keen interest in environmental sustainability, and the role of research in addressing global challenges

Communication & advocacy skills: Excellent verbal and written communication skills, with the ability to influence and inspire a range of stakeholders

Financial acumen: An understanding of financial management and the ability to oversee budgets and funding strategies effectively

Collaborative approach: Ability to work in a collaborative, consensus-driven environment, both within the Board and with the Executive Team, and external stakeholders

Commitment to diversity and inclusion: A commitment to ensuring diversity and inclusion is embedded in SAMS' work, both within its governance structures and its research practices

Qualifications

- Senior leadership or governance experience; ideally in research, academia, non-profit, or public sector organisations; or if from a commercial background an understanding of these types of organisations
- Demonstrable knowledge of marine science or related environmental fields is desirable but not essential
- A strong professional network within relevant sectors would be advantageous

Benefits of the role

- **Impact:** Lead the strategic direction of a world-renowned institution and make a significant contribution to marine science, sustainability, and policy.
- **Networking:** Access to a global network of researchers, policymakers, and leaders in the marine and environmental sectors.
- **Personal development:** Gain valuable experience and exposure to senior leadership in a complex, multi-stakeholder environment.



How to Apply

Please submit your CV and supporting letter highlighting evidence how your experience, skills and knowledge match the requirements in one combined document.

Closing date: 20th January 2025

More info and submission portal:

<https://www.aspenpeople.co.uk/microsite/sams/how-to-apply/>