

# LED Society

## STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTION

### Candidate application form

**Title:** Professor

**Name:** Helen

**Surname:** Roberts

**Affiliation:** Aberystwyth University, United Kingdom



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#### Select the position you are applying for:

**President**

**Young researcher** (PhD degree awarded on [Click or tap to enter a date.](#))

**Ordinary member**

#### Biography:

I have been involved in luminescence research for over 30 years, and am currently Co-Director of the Aberystwyth Luminescence Research Laboratory (ALRL) in the UK, where I have been based for the last 25 years. I am Vice-President of the Stratigraphy and Geochronology Commission (SACCOM), one of the five Commissions of the International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA) (Term of office: 2019-2023). I am a member of the International Editorial Advisory Board for the journal Earth Surface Processes and Landforms, and have just concluded the roles of External Examiner (MSc in Quaternary Science) and Chief External Examiner (School of Life Sciences and the Environment) at Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.

My research encompasses pure research into luminescence characteristics, methodological advances in luminescence techniques, equipment development, and the application of luminescence dating to address key palaeoclimatic, palaeoenvironmental, archaeological, and geomorphological questions. I have developed an extensive network of research collaborators from a range of academic disciplines, and located across the world, including China, North and South America, Europe and UK, eastern and southern Africa. I have published more than 80

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peer-reviewed papers in internationally recognised, ISI journals, plus additional published items including book and monograph chapters, encyclopedia entries, field guides, and project reports, as well as contributions to creative outputs/exhibitions.

I am committed to the personal and academic development of colleagues and researchers across the full range of career stages from graduate students through to senior colleagues, delivering a range of research skills and leadership workshops and undertaking both formal and informal mentoring roles. I devised, coordinate and co-deliver the week-long intensive Continuing Professional Development course “Short Course in Luminescence Dating: Theory, Methods and Application”, which ARL has run essentially annually since 2013.

I have an active teaching and research role in the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, Aberystwyth University, and have also chaired various University-level committees/groups, including leading the Research Ethics Panel. Since 2019 I have held a significant research leadership role with responsibility for supporting and enabling research across the whole of Aberystwyth University, reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor and her Executive leadership team of Pro Vice-Chancellors.

**Motivation:** *(Please describe your vision for the LED Society, the contribution you would like to make, etc.)*

In establishing a society for our discipline there should be no limits to the long-term vision, but the reality of the situation is that in the earliest days there is much thoughtful and practical work to be done to establish the firm foundations from which the society can grow. We need to establish realistic aims and purposes that are proportionate to our stage of development as a society. We should be ambitious for our society in the longer term, but recognise that in the immediate term our focus must necessarily be on developing and documenting our mission, ethos, structures, and constitution.

To my mind, the primary responsibility of the LED Society in the earliest days is to ensure the continuity of the International Luminescence and Electron Spin Resonance Dating conference by promoting and assisting in the organisation of this meeting, including providing continuity of experience to support the local organising committees and upholding the values of the Society. In the immediate term, the Society would also provide a means of enhancing networking and communication within our discipline, making it easier to connect, share expertise and opportunities, find collaborators and mentors, develop initiatives, etc.. I see these two key functions of the Society as instrumental to maintaining and enhancing a successful and vibrant research culture within (and for) our discipline.

Values of equality, diversity and inclusion are key to my vision for the LED Society – our Society must represent, serve, consider and promote all of our community regardless of sex or gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability (including hidden disabilities), beliefs, career stage, caring responsibilities etc. Of equal importance are ethics and integrity in our research.

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My commitment to these values in research is illustrated through my years of experience serving as Chair of Aberystwyth University Research Ethics Panel, and the University Research Ethics Committee (responsible for ethics, integrity, and governance of research). I am also committed to the professional development of colleagues at all levels in the academic community, from students to senior colleagues, and across academic, technical and research roles, and have demonstrated this through both formal and informal mentoring arrangements.

I believe I have the skills and experience to serve as President of the LED Society. I am currently (2019-2023) the elected Vice-President of the Stratigraphy and Geochronology Commission (SACCOM), one of the five commissions of the International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA). I co-direct the Aberystwyth Luminescence Research Laboratory (ALRL) and have research interests in the development of techniques and equipment, and in the application of luminescence chronology. And I understand and value the diverse nature of research undertaken within our discipline. I also have experience in significant leadership roles within my University, giving me a skillset that I believe would be of particular benefit to the Society during its inaugural term when it must focus on the development of the foundations underpinning its operation to enable it to fulfil its immediate and longer-term goals. This experience includes:

- leading various university Task and Finish Groups involving diverse groups of colleagues (e.g. leading on the Aberystwyth University response to protect and support research and researchers during the Covid-19 pandemic, and ensure research continuity for the University and enabling laboratories/facilities to operate during lockdown),
- developing and implementing action plans (e.g. I devised the Aberystwyth University action plan that supports our commitment to the Concordat for Researcher Development – a UK initiative with targets and milestones)
- devising operational structures and terms of reference for committees/groups, and chairing meetings, etc.
- leading on complex and significant initiatives (e.g. through my University role as Director of Research Excellence and Impact, I led the entire submission from my University to the National assessment of research within the UK that takes place every 6-7 years ('REF 2021'), the results of which inform the level of research funding awarded to each individual UK university over the following 6 or 7 years).