

## Governing Authority Election 2025: Candidate Profile – Other academic staff



Alastair McKinstry  
Irish Centre for High-end Computing

### Candidate Biographical Details / Sonraí Beathaisnéise an Iarrthóra

Alastair is a Research fellow and Environmental program lead at the Irish Centre for High-end Computing (in the College of Science and Engineering). He has been at ICHEC / NUIG since 2006. He and his family have lived in Maigh Cuilinn since 1999.

Before NUIG, He graduated with MSc in Physics TCD and moved to Galway in 1996 to work on supercomputers at Digital/Compaq; he was also a Principal Engineer at 3Com and Oracle.

Alastair has been responsible for climate modelling and weather model development, working with Met. Éireann to bring the Harmonie weather model to operation in Ireland. He worked on the EC-Earth climate model processing and publishing ocean data. He has been work package lead in multiple Horizon projects on climate model optimisation. Recent work has included setting up Earth Observation and data management for Environmental data, as PI for multiple EPA, ESA and commercial projects.

He has been active in IFUT, the Irish federation of University Teachers since 2009, and is currently Chair of the University of Galway Branch, and was Green Party Councillor on Galway county council 2019-2024.

### Candidate Statement / Ráiteas an Iarrthóra

I wish to stand for the Governing Authority to bring the views of researchers and precarious staff to the Authority. We have a significant number of staff in college who are in precarious employment, working multiple part-time posts across multiple colleges to try and make a career. At IFUT it has been my task and honour to represent many staff in getting their rights, from CIDs and promotions to securing proper redundancies where necessary. Most of this work goes on quietly as those in precarious positions need discreet representation without fanfare and press releases as they seek security. We continue this task and it needs to be brought to the Authorities attention by someone other than University management.



Researchers also find themselves in a precarious position. There is a growing cohort (myself included) that are neither academics nor technical staff but doing operationally critical work and teaching. CIDs aside, researchers are typically on soft money and should not be depending on working overtime and winning grants with job insecurity all the way through their career. There must be a third path between pure academia and technical support for researchers: such a career structure exists elsewhere in Europe from STFC in the UK to MPI centres in Germany, and is developing here and I think I can help bring experience of this to Údarás.

### **Candidate Outline of Relevant Competencies / Cur síos an Iarrthóra ar Inniúlachtaí Ábhartha**

Sectoral, professional:

- Researcher in Climate, computer science
- Engineer to Principal Engineer in Digital.Compaq, Oracle
- Working in a start-up: Ildána (satellite communications) 2004-2006

Teaching:

- Lecturer on HPC, computational science and data analytics of climate, both in NUIG and other colleges (dating back to computer science in GMIT, 1996-2000; developing short courses at ICHEC)

Representation and Governance:

- Union representative, secretary and chair of IFUT since 2009.
- County councillor in Galway County Council, 2019-2024

Leadership:

- PI and WP lead in projects including multiple Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe, EPA, ESA, EU Commission, etc
- Responsible for setting up and leading the Environmental Activities group in ICHEC, the Irish Centre for High-End Computing

Governance:

- Vice-President of Finance IFUT (2019-2020)
- IFUT Executive and Council