

Governing Authority Election 2025: Candidate Profile – Other academic staff



Dr Merve Suzan Zedan
School of Biological and Chemical Sciences

Candidate Biographical Details / Sonraí Beathaisnéise an Iarrthóra

Dr. Merve Zedan is a Cypriot scientist whose passion for microbiology brought her to Imperial College London for her BSc Microbiology degree. She completed her Master of Research in Bacterial Pathogenesis and Infection and pursued her PhD in the Gründling lab investigating the requirement of the signalling nucleotide c-di-AMP for the growth of *Staphylococcus aureus* at Imperial. This fundamental research has led to the generation on knowledge on the biology of this critical pathogen.

Merve moved to Galway in January 2020, for her postdoc in the O’Gara group to integrate molecular microbiology with antimicrobial resistance research. In Galway, Merve secured grants from national and international funders supporting her work, and was recently awarded a 4-year Research Ireland Pathway Fellowship to establish her independent research. Her research group is investigating the mechanisms of antibiotic resistance in bacterial pathogens, whilst developing novel therapeutics to tackle them.

Merve established, and is the chair of the Research Staff Network, with the mission of supporting University of Galway researchers. She represents researchers on College and School Research and Innovation committees, Academic Council, the Irish Research Staff Association. Merve is passionate about representing the valuable contributions and influence decisions made around researchers within the university.

Candidate Statement / Ráiteas an Iarrthóra

I am a Cypriot scientist, with BSc, MRes and PhD in Microbiology from Imperial College London. I moved to Galway in 2020, for my postdoctoral work, and was recently awarded the Research Ireland Pathway Fellowship to establish my independent research.

I have been a researcher representative at the CSE Research and Innovation Committee for the past two years where I have raised contract research staff issues, and have contributed towards the eligibility criteria on internal funding applications to be more inclusive.

The AdvanceHE Aurora Leadership Programme encouraged me to create the Research Staff Network, to support our research community. I have successfully co-established the University of Galway Research Staff Network in 2024, and I am the chair of this network.

I have been a contract researcher in Galway for 5 years, and I believe it is crucial to have representation of contract research staff both internally, and also nationally. I am the EDI officer at the Irish Research Staff Association and take part in key discussions focusing on future research policies, sustainable careers and finding solutions to precarious employment of researchers in Ireland.

I am passionate about representing researchers and their valuable contributions, and voicing the unique challenges within this diverse group of staff. Therefore, if elected, I will influence the discussions around the university's strategic direction and governance, bringing the representative voice and the perspective as a researcher.

It has been an honour to represent my researcher colleagues to date on Research and Innovation Committees, on Academic Council, and as the Chair of the Research Staff Network, and I enjoyed these roles immensely. I would be extremely grateful for your support and No.1 vote for this upcoming Governing Authority election so that I can represent the researcher voice ('Other Academic' category) on this governance body of our university.

Is eolaí Cipireach mé, le BSc, MRes agus PhD i Micribhitheolaíocht ó Imperial College London. Bhog mé go Gaillimh in 2020, le haghaidh m'obair iardhochtúireachta, agus le déanaí bronnadh Comhaltacht Pathway Research Ireland orm chun mo thaighde neamhspleách a bhunú.

Bhí mé i m'ionadaí taighdeoir ag an gCoiste Taighde agus Nuálaíochta CSE le dhá bhliain anuas, agus d'ardaigh mé saincheistanna foirne taighde ar conradh, agus chuir mé leis na critéir incháilitheachta maidir le hiarratais ar mhaoiniú inmheánach a bheith níos cuimsithí.

Spreag Clár Ceannaireachta Aurora AdvanceHE mé chun an Líonra Foirne Taighde a chruthú chun tacú lenár bpobal taighde. D'éirigh liom Líonra Foirne Taighde Ollscoil na Gaillimhe a chomhbhunú in 2024, agus is mise cathaoirleach an líonra seo.

Tá mé i mo thaighdeoir ar conradh i nGaillimh le 5 bliana, agus creidim go bhfuil sé ríthábhachtach ionadaíocht a bheith againn ar fhoireann taighde ar conradh go hinmheánach agus go náisiúnta freisin. Is mise an t-oifigeach EDI ag Cumann Foirne Taighde na hÉireann agus glacaim páirt i bplé lárnacha ag díriú ar bheartais taighde amach anseo, gairmeacha beatha inbhuanaithe agus teacht ar réitigh ar fhostaíocht neamhbhuana taighdeoirí in Éirinn.

Táim paiseanta faoi ionadaíocht a dhéanamh ar thaighdeoirí agus a gcuid oibre luachmhara, chomh maith leis na dúshláin uathúla laistigh den ghrúpa ilghnéitheach foirne seo a chur in iúl. Dá bhrí sin, má thoghtar mé, beidh tionchar agam ar an bplé maidir le treo straitéiseach agus rialachas na hollscoile, ag tabhairt an guth ionadaíoch agus an dearcadh mar thaighdeoir.

Ba mhór an onóir ionadaíocht a dhéanamh do mo chomhghleacaithe taighde go dtí seo ar Choistí Taighde agus Nuálaíochta, ar an gComhairle Acadúil, agus mar Chathaoirleach ar an



Líonra Foirne Taighde, agus bhain mé taitneamh as gach nóiméad de. Bheinn thar a bheith buíoch as bhur dtacaíocht agus vóta Uimh.1 do thoghchán an Údaráis Rialaithe seo atá le teacht ionas gur féidir liom ionadaíocht a dhéanamh thar ceann an taighdeora (Catagóir 'Acadúil Eile') ar an gcomhlacht rialachais seo dár n-ollscoil.

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

My experience in running my independently funded research group, and management of research projects showcase my expertise in securing funding, financial reporting, auditing, risk management, and strategic planning. My work is aligned with the university's strategic priorities, including sustainability, cybersecurity, and research excellence.

I have a strong understanding and knowledge of governance frameworks, with experience in legal and regulatory compliance across research and education sectors.

I have actively contributed to risk management strategies both in Class 2 biological hazard laboratories, but also in grant management and research project life-cycles, ensuring that legal obligations are met in terms of research integrity.

I have strategically implemented the Research Staff Network, showcasing my leadership skills, representing over 700 contract researchers in this university, helped outreach and conference organisation initiatives, contributing to the development of research culture in our university. My ability to engage and manage stakeholders has been critical in driving my successful career to date, 5-years post PhD. I won awards pitching ideas to external reviewers, engaged with patent attorneys for protecting IP, whilst securing national and international funding and managing international collaborations.

I represent researchers at the SBCS School Board and CSE Research and Innovation Committees. The AdvanceHE Aurora Leadership Programme encouraged me to successfully establish the Research Staff Network, to support researchers, and I am the chair of this network. I am the EDI officer at the Irish Research Staff Association and take part in key discussions focusing on future research policies.

I have keen understanding of the opportunities and challenges posed by AI and emerging technologies.

I am undertaking CELT Teaching and Learning Diploma, and I understand the public education sector, as well as student experience and learning.

I am a team-oriented, solution-focused, flexible, and strategic research group leader, who values collegiality and is committed to evidence-based decision-making.