



Governing Authority Election 2025: Candidate Profile – Professional support



Nuala McGuinn
Center for Adult Learning & Professional Development

Candidate Biographical Details / Sonraí Beathaisnéise an Iarrthóra

Education

Bachelor of Education - St Patrick's College, Dublin (1986 – 1989)
Higher Diploma in Business Studies - University of Galway (1991 – 1992)
Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing Practice – University of Galway (1992 – 1993)
MA Management in Education – SETU Waterford (1999 – 2002)
MSc Marketing Practice – University of Galway (2014 – 2016)
Professional Diploma Executive Coaching – IMI (2023 – 2024)

Experience

Working as Director, Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development since 2013 and prior to that (from 2000), as Adult Education Development Officer. I have experience of the Technological University sector (TUS), having worked for five years in the roles of Industrial Liaison Officer and European Officer and in Brussels as part of the European Business Innovation Network. With 20+ years' experience in adult learning and engagement with industry, I have effectively led many inter-disciplinary teams and managed large-scale projects and budgets.

I commenced my career as a primary school teacher and have merged my interest in teaching and education management with my current role which is both external and internal facing in the design, development and delivery of academic programmes. My interests include workforce development, flexible work-based learning, models of accreditation for prior learning and developing adult learners in their professional development journey.

Candidate Statement / Ráiteas an Iarrthóra

I'm Nuala McGuinn and I'm running for election in the University's Governing Authority. I have been working in the University, at the Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development for more than 20 years in the area of course design, development and delivery of part-time, flexible programmes for adult learners.



My role is both external and internal facing, connecting academic and professional support services staff with external organisations so that together we can make education accessible to all learners. My work often challenges the current systems and processes to cater for non-traditional learners.

I see the role of the Professional Services representative on Governing Authority as another key connecting role. Connecting professional services staff with the strategic direction and leadership of the University, to drive innovation and foster collaboration.

I'm passionate about contributing to the strategic vision and long-term success of our University. With my experience in Adult Learning, I bring a proven track record of leadership and management, strategic planning and stakeholder management.

I am committed to fostering innovation and promoting collaboration to address challenges and seize opportunities to make our University ready for the world of the future and to position it as a key driver of change in the region and beyond. My goal is to represent the interests of the professional services group to help steer the University towards sustainable growth and impact.

I aim to be the voice of the professional services staff at the University's decision-making table so that this critical group of employees can contribute directly to the University's mission of advancing education and groundbreaking research to the benefit of society.

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

As Director of CALPD, my role is about leading and implementing the adult learning and continuing professional development vision, mission and strategy for the University.

I have extensive stakeholder management experience having developed and managed key strategic relationship with organisations such as Medtronic, SOLAS, Skillnets in the expansion of the University's professional development programmes for work-based learners. In developing the University's capacity to deliver innovative education models, I work with academics and professional support Units. I have developed excellent leadership, influencing, persuasion and negotiation skills and the ability to collaborate with diverse stakeholders.

With 12+ year's experience as Unit Director, I lead on business priorities in strategic planning and implementation, quality and risk management mitigation. I oversee the budget planning/management process and have experience of successfully applying for and managing EU/tender applications for the development of flexible-learning pathways for professional learners.

I am responsible for the leadership and management of a team of 20 people. I represent the Unit on cross-faculty committees including Academic Council Standing, Widening Access and Participation, Quality Enhancement and Teaching and Learning Committees. Through committee experience, I have an understanding of the decision-making processes within the University and articulate this strategy to my team and wider audiences, as appropriate.

I network effectively while representing the University at national and international events. I am Chair of the HELLIN Network, a member of the West Regional Skills Forum Steering Group, Bia



Innovator Education Group and the Micro-credentials National project Steering Committee. I Chair the Board of Management of a large primary school in my area. Through these roles, I have gained market insights and data on upskilling needs of our stakeholders and would like to join Governing Authority so that I can contribute to the future vision and strategy of the University.