

Governing Authority Election 2025: Candidate Profile – Professional support staff



Sylvia McDonagh
School of Medicine

Candidate Biographical Details / Sonraí Beathaisnéise an Iarrthóra

Sylvia is Athena Swan Project Manager in the School of Medicine. She was raised and educated in Galway. She has a Bachelor of Commerce, Masters in International Management, Executive Masters in Business Administration (MBA) and a Diploma in Irish from University of Galway. She is also a qualified Accounting Technician, being granted membership in 2001. She has worked in the University of Galway Library since 2002. Prior to that, her career included a wide variety of administrative and accounting roles in Galway City Council, Kelly Office Supplies and many other organisations.

Over her time working in the University, Sylvia has been involved in many University committees, including University Women's Network, Student Digital Pathways feasibility and advisory group, FSPCG (Financial Systems & Processes Customer Group), University and HSE Joint Working Group. She has been a member of and has chaired national working groups in the Accounting Technician Public Sector Working Group and National Intern Training Network Programme Managers Group.

Sylvia has been chair Galway City based Basketball Club for the past 4 years, has also chaired the Parents Council of Dominican College, Galway. She has also served as the parent representative on the Board of Directors of Dominican College, Taylors Hill, Galway.

Candidate Statement / Ráiteas an Iarrthóra

I am submitting an application for internal membership of Governing Authority from the Professional Support Staff cohort. I am confident that I possess the experience and qualifications required to contribute to this role in a meaningful and effective manner. I have a positive approach to collaboration and can have an impact on the leadership and strategic direction of the University of Galway's Governing Authority.

I am a strong advocate for fairness for all and work hard to support new staff in their roles as a buddy or mentor, whichever is required.

In addition, I have a proven track record in administrative and management experience, such as budgeting and resource allocation. I am skilled in navigating the intricacies of university



governance and have demonstrated an ability to make fact based decisions that benefit the entire team or community.

I have always approached roles with integrity and promote inclusive leadership styles which empower others with a view to ensuring a sustainable future for the University of Galway. Given my dedication, strategic vision and future orientated mindset, I am confident I can make an invaluable contribution to the University's Governing Authority, representing all stakeholders using a fair and common sense approach to initiatives.

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

It is my belief that I fulfill the requirements for many of the essential and desirable requirements.

As an executive member of the SoNM School Executive and Joint Working Group, and as chair and Board Member of sports and school boards and committees, I have gained extensive experience of creating a positive and compliant governance structure and pathway.

I have been able to use the educational knowledge of strategy to real life experiences internal and external to the University.

I have managed teams effectively in multiple roles.

A qualified Accounting Technician, I manage multiple budgets for the past 12 years in the SoM and SoNM and managed multi-million budgets in DERI (INSIGHT) from Nov 2003 to Jan 2009. I have worked in the Public Sector since 2001 and in the University of Galway since 2002, having gained invaluable experience in many units across the institution.

Have led national projects which have enabled streamlining of communications and record management for the intern programme across six networks nationwide.

Have led a number tenders at local and national level to ensure value for money in agreed contracts.

Using a calm, broad perspective approach to crisis management, demonstrated with the smooth transition from face-to-face to online delivery of multiple skills training for interns during Covid. This led to the development of an effective hybrid programme delivery post Covid.

A team player, diligent, ensuring contributions to larger scale goals are positive and collegial. I consider all stakeholders in decision making, seeking the best outcome for the majority.

I encourage engagement from all, recognising that all members have valid opinions which need to be heard and I like to provide solutions where possible.

Approach issues with an open approach, promoting positive values, having prepared by researching problems thoroughly. I make informed decisions, using common sense approaches.