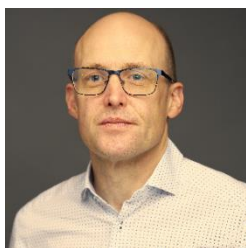




Governing Authority Election 2026: Candidate Profile – Professional Support Staff



Declan McGrath
Bursar's Office

Candidate Biographical Details / Sonraí Beathaisnéise an Iarrthóra

Declan McGrath is Director of Research Accounts at the University of Galway, where he leads a team responsible for the financial management of externally funded research across the full post-award lifecycle. He works closely with the Bursar's Office and the Office of the Vice-President for Research, supporting strategic decision-making, governance, and compliance across a diverse portfolio of national and European funding programmes.

Declan has extensive experience in financial management, audit, and regulatory compliance, including oversight of complex funding streams such as Horizon Europe, Research Ireland, and other national funding agencies. He has played a key role in strengthening financial controls, improving reporting processes, and driving operational efficiencies within the University's research ecosystem. He is an active contributor to institutional initiatives, including the Research Process Improvement programme, and is committed to enhancing transparency, accountability, and service delivery across the University.

A qualified accountant, Declan brings a practical, solutions-focused approach, underpinned by strong cross-functional collaboration and a deep understanding of how the University operates.

Candidate Statement / Ráiteas an Iarrthóra

I am standing for election to the Governing Authority because I believe professional support staff should have a strong, informed voice in the strategic direction of the University.

Through my role as Director of Research Accounts, I have developed a broad, practical understanding of how the University operates — across academic, administrative and research functions. I see first-hand the challenges we face, from increasing complexity and regulatory demands to the need to deliver high-quality services with finite resources.

If elected, I will bring a balanced, pragmatic approach to decision-making, grounded in evidence, transparency and accountability. I will focus on ensuring that decisions are well-informed, that resources are used effectively, and that the impact on staff and students is fully considered.

I am committed to representing the perspectives of professional support staff, recognising the vital role they play in the success of the University. I am also mindful of the diversity of roles, backgrounds and experiences across the University community, and will work to ensure that all



voices are heard and valued in governance decisions. I will engage openly, listen carefully, and advocate for a well-run, sustainable and inclusive institution that supports excellence in teaching, research, and the overall staff and student experience.

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

I bring a strong combination of financial expertise, governance experience and a deep understanding of how the University operates. As Director of Research Accounts, I lead a team managing the financial administration of externally funded research within a complex and highly regulated environment, giving me a University-wide perspective on both operational and strategic challenges.

My core competencies include strategic financial management, risk and compliance, and operational improvement. I have extensive experience in financial planning, budget management, internal controls, audit, and reporting to statutory funding bodies. I have worked closely with senior leadership, academic and professional services colleagues to strengthen controls, improve processes, and ensure effective use of public funds.

I bring a strong focus on long-term strategic planning and on ensuring the University is well-positioned to respond to future challenges and opportunities. I also understand the broader higher education and public funding landscape, and the importance of effective external positioning.

I am collaborative, solutions-focused and evidence-based in my approach. I listen carefully, engage constructively and aim to build consensus while keeping the University's mission and values at the centre of decision-making.

I am committed to supporting an inclusive, diverse, transparent and accountable University, and to contributing positively to its strategic leadership.