

Governing Authority Election 2026: Candidate Profile – Professional Support Staff



Nuala McGuinn
Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development

Candidate Biographical Details / Sonraí Beathaisnéise an Iarrthóra

I am presently Director, Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development (CALPD) since 2013, and have previously worked in the Technological University sector (TUS). I also worked in the private sector with the European Business Innovation Network in Brussels, where I led a transnational project developing business support services for client SMEs across Europe.

I actually commenced my career as a primary school teacher and have now merged my interest in teaching and education management with my current role which is both external and internal facing.

With 25+ 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 represent the University at national and international events and I am a member of a number of internal and external committees. I Chair the Board of Management of a large primary school in my area and I am an active member of the University coaching panel, having trained as an executive coach.

Through these roles, I have gained market insights and an in-depth understanding of the needs of our University stakeholders and how we can shape the University to be a strong force regionally and beyond.

Candidate Statement / Ráiteas an Iarrthóra

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. This 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, change management, strategic planning and stakeholder management.



I am committed to fostering innovation and promoting collaboration to address challenges and opportunities arising from evolving socio-economic, demographic, technological factors, including AI. These shifts will significantly impact the future of the education sector, influencing how we redefine our programmes, our work practices and our impact. To succeed, we must ensure our University remains competitive and strategically positioned - capable of responding with agility and purpose, is globally relevant and recognised as a key driver of positive change regionally, nationally and internationally.

My goal is to represent the interests of the professional services group to help steer the University towards sustainable growth and impact. I will be a strong, balanced voice for professional services staff at the University's decision-making table so that this critical group of employees are recognised and 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

Being a member of the Governing Authority requires a track record in leadership, delivering complex cross-functional projects, experience of negotiations, and a strong sense of entrepreneurship and innovation. In my role as Director of CALPD, I have demonstrated strategic leadership by shaping and delivering the University's strategy for adult learning and continuing professional development.

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

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.

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 policies and the decision-making processes within the University.

I network effectively while representing the University at national and international events. I am a member of a number of external committees such as the HELLIN Network, West Regional Skills Forum Steering Group, Bia Innovator Education Group and the Micro-credentials National project Steering Committee.

With this experience and expertise, I consider that I am a strong candidate to contribute to the future vision and strategy of the University.