

IFUT calls for immediate publication of Oireachtas Report on Third-Level Funding

New EU data rules out increasing fees as a funding source

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The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has called for immediate publication of the Oireachtas Committee Report on Third-Level Funding and an end to Government dithering on increased resources, following publication of new EU data which effectively removes hiking student fees as a source of extra income for the sector.

IFUT General Secretary, Joan Donegan, said that figures showing Ireland already has the second highest undergraduate fees among 42 countries surveyed, removes the smokescreen of suggesting parents and students should carry the burden of the crisis in Third-Level.

“The Government has dithered and obfuscated for the past 16 months on the findings of the 2016 Cassells Report. The follow-on report of the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills is now being put on the shelf without even been published” she said.

This year’s Budget continued the policy of starvation-style funding for Third-Level, despite widespread demands throughout the Education Sector that the crisis be confronted, Joan Donegan said.

“The stark facts are that student numbers continue to rise rapidly while the academic staff to student-ratio continues to deteriorate.

“In addition temporary and low-pay staff contracts mean that the very fabric of Third-Level Education is being steadily undermined.

“The Budget additional Budgetary proposal for Third-Level, drawn mostly from an industry levy with little direct Exchequer contribution, is little more than half of the minimum extra funding identified as necessary in the Cassells Report.

“In addition, the new EU figures suggest that, with Irish undergraduate fee levels at €3,000 a year, parents and students are being forced to carry an unacceptable burden due to ongoing indecision and underfunding. 25 of the 42 countries charge €1,000 a year or less and 11 of these have no Third-Level Fees whatever.

“The Minister for Finance should now make provision for emergency additional resources for University Funding, through the Finance Act or other supplementary mechanisms,” Joan Donegan said.

ENDS

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