

## **IFUT welcomes government pledge on higher education funding and staff to student ratios**

*Wed. May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022*

The Irish Federation of University teachers (IFUT) has welcomed the government's plan to increase investment in higher education and address the deterioration of staff:student ratios.

Frank Jones, General Secretary of IFUT, said that the explicit commitment to address the core funding deficit in higher education is as significant as it is overdue.

"IFUT looks forward to working closely with all stakeholders to ensure that Exchequer funding and supports are delivered starting with the upcoming Budget later this year.

"Restoration of adequate state funding for our higher education colleges has been a long demand from IFUT. We are pleased that Minister Harris has now prioritised this issue

"Addressing the staff to student ratio, one of the worst in the OECD, is another vital area and there is now a very real prospect of achieving meaningful progress. It will be important that initiatives in this area are linked to tackling and reversing the escalation in precarious employment that threatens to undermine the very fabric of teaching in higher education.

"Removal of the embargo on hiring permanent staff as part of the Employment Control Framework would be an important first step here," Frank Jones said.

IFUT has also welcomed the establishment by Minister Harris of an implementation and review group to address the future development and roll-out of these plans.

"It is important that all stakeholders have a full input to this process and IFUT intends to play a full and positive role in this regard."

Higher Education student numbers are projected to surge for the remainder of this decade.

"It is essential that the sector remains fully at the forefront of government focus so that Minister Harris and his Department are enabled to deliver effectively on this.

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