

Cuts to staff and recurrent grants are undermining viability of third-level colleges, says IFUT

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New figures which reveal major reductions in both staffing and recurrent grants to third level colleges suggest a major threat to the viability of third level education, the Irish Federation of university Teachers (IFUT) warns.

New figures from the Department of Education show that between 2008 and 2012 the number of academic staff in HEA supported third-level institutions fell by 12%, from 5301 to 4,666. Recurrent grant allocations to universities and colleges between 2008 and 2012 fell by 25%

The largest cuts in recurrent grants were at UCD which experienced a reduction of over 25%. Other universities have taken major cuts, including TCD (down 22%), UCC (-21%), NUI Maynooth (-18%) and NUIG (-16%).

Teacher education has not been spared, with St Pat's Drumcondra cut by 25% and Mary Immaculate College in Limerick down 18% in the four year period reviewed. These cuts show the extent of the crisis facing third-level education and must be reversed as a matter of urgency, Mike Jennings, General Secretary of IFUT, says.

“Drastic cuts in grants and lecturer numbers as revealed above, combined with increased student numbers over the same period, estimated at around 20%, are unsustainable. They will undermine the ability of our third-level institutions to deliver the type and quality of graduate that is necessary to maintain and develop our economy and society.

“The Minister for Education must address this issue as a matter of urgency and ensure that our young people, who are being asked to pay ever-increasing registration fees to attend college, can continue to receive the necessary standard of education,” Mike Jennings said.

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