

Shocking level of graduate emigration must be addressed, says IFUT

Thursday, Aug 28th, 2014

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has called for a new approach to promoting graduate and research jobs in Ireland, saying many highly qualified young people are being forced to emigrate because of lack of real job opportunities here.

Mike Jennings, General Secretary of IFUT, said that new figures from the Central Statistics Office showing that almost half of our emigrants are graduates confirms that tens of thousands of highly qualified young people now annually see a better future for themselves abroad.

“Despite a fall in overall emigration levels last year, the new CSO figures reveal a shocking 30% jump in graduate emigration. 29,000 of those emigrating last year were students prior to leaving, compared to just 20,200 the previous year,” he said

IFUT alone has identified two key areas of policy failure that results in graduates being forced to emigrate, Mike Jennings said:

- The treatment of researchers, where a combination of short-term contracts and low pay is forcing new graduate researchers to almost literally live from week-to-week and hand-to-mouth. No wonder they choose emigration.
- The refusal to employ additional teaching and tutorial staff to cater for the rapid increase in third-level student numbers, which is both forcing qualified personnel to emigrate and putting increasingly unbearable pressure on those who continue to work in our third-level institutions.

“The new CSO statistics strongly suggest that this is indicative of a more general failure to address the issue of graduate employment in the interests of society.

“Families and individual students are being forced to pay ever-increasing costs to obtain a third level degree. The government must take urgent measures to provide young and highly qualified people with sustainable employment here in Ireland, not least for the vital input such a move would make to assisting and speeding up economic and social recovery,” Mike Jennings said.

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