

## **Proposals for UK Tory-style ‘Teaching Excellence Framework’ in universities here ‘incredible and exasperating’, says IFUT**

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The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has described as ‘incredible and exasperating’ suggestions that Education Minister, Richard Bruton, is considering the introduction of a Tory-style ‘Teaching Excellence Framework’(TEF) as part of a proposed review on standards in higher education.

IFUT General Secretary, Mike Jennings, said “how can anyone seriously propose that our already short-staffed and overworked universities should divert even more funds and personnel to more form filling and bureaucracy.

“A TEF system here would simply replicate a cumbersome, bureaucratic approach that has failed to deliver improvements in English third-level, absorbs time of staff unnecessarily and ignores the real problems facing third-level education in Ireland.

The issues at third-level in Ireland are already clear - greatly reduced teaching staff numbers and ever increasing student enrolment, compounded by a starving of the sector of necessary state investment.

“This is not just an IFUT view, it is mirrored by statements from IBEC, HEA and other bodies.

“Why does the Minister and government need another consultation and review on higher education? There are reviews and recommendations piling high on government shelves that have remained unimplemented.

“Any suggestion of introducing a TEF-based approach in Ireland will further demoralise our universities, weaken their status internationally and feed into a further cost-cutting mentality. There is already evidence of TEF being used in the UK for further significant staff cuts, for example in the University of Manchester.

“The government should plan to deliver a significant increase in third-level funding in the forthcoming Budget to address years of spending retrenchment, not seek to create smokescreens in an attempt to dodge the necessary funding decisions for yet another year,” Mike Jennings said.

**ENDS**

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