

**Government reliance on business funding for third level criticised by
IFUT**

10 November 2017

Joan Donegan, General Secretary of the Irish Federation of University (IFUT), said that the ever-increasing emphasis by Government on the need to adapt University Education to the immediate needs of industry and business is very concerning.

“On the one hand, we are being told that in future no job will be for life and that young people must, therefore, become highly adaptable and open to career change.

“On the other, the short-term and often narrow needs of certain industries and business sectors are now being strongly promoted as the basis for university funding and course development.

“In his recent Budget speech Finance Minister Pascal Donohue announced an increase in the National Training Fund Levy on Employers to 0.8% this year, 0.9% in 2019, increasing to one per cent 2020. He added that this “will ensure that employers have an essential role for determining priorities in this crucial sector”.

“But what happens when the needs of business or industry suddenly change or when issues like Brexit suddenly alter the economic environment?

“Will students ‘educated’ under a narrower, business-driven model of education have the adaptability and skills to survive in a radically changed work environment?”

“This raises fundamental questions about the future of our universities in society, how the Government views the development of funding models and, as a consequence, its view of Academic Freedom and the autonomy of the entire university system in the years ahead,” Joan Donegan said.

ENDS

For further information on this media release, please contact:

John Gallagher, John Gallagher Consulting. Tel. 087 9369888

Joan Donegan, General Secretary, IFUT, Tel 087 1315960