

Lack of state funding for higher education a major impediment to student access, says, IFUT

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The consistent failure of the government to restore funding levels to higher education is a major impediment to access by students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has stated.

Responding to new data from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) which found that only 10% of the national student population is from a disadvantaged background, Frank Jones, Deputy General Secretary of IFUT, said the failure to adequately fund areas such as adequate staffing levels and student grants had a very strong deterrent impact on those from less well off families. Cuts in funding affect those from disadvantaged backgrounds disproportionately.

"This new data again shows the need for the government to make decisions around the recommendations of the 2016 Cassells Report which emphasised the very serious funding crisis in the sector."

"This new data also raises questions over the current government review of the HEA with its overemphasis on 'regulation' issues."

"Anybody in charge of the higher education sector should have a wide remit, including an ability to address issues related to state funding, access and academic freedom. The government should expand any review of the HEA to accommodate these issues also," Frank Jones said.

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