

5 Steps to Revive Higher Education

General Election 2020

1 Address Student Hardship

IFUT calls on all parties forming the next government to phase out student fees and to revise the grant system to address the increasing costs, including the soaring accommodation costs, that are unmanageable to many, in or contemplating entering Higher Education.

2 Funding of Higher Education

IFUT calls on all parties forming the next government to adequately fund higher education, to deliver the funding requirements outlined in the Cassells Report, which specifies the need for €600m to be invested in the five years to 2021 with a further €1bn over the following decade.

3 Decent Terms & Conditions of Employment

IFUT calls on all parties forming the next government to progressively tackle precarious work practices in the sector. A 'Task Force' or 'Expert Group' should be formed to develop recommendations for Government across Higher Education. It could replicate the Expert Group on Fixed-Term and Part-Time Employment in Lecturing in Third Level Education in Ireland, 2016 but look across all grades of staff engaged in Higher Education.

4 Student : Lecturer Ratio

IFUT calls on all parties forming the next government to recognise and address this and to commit to commencing on a trajectory in the short-term that will bring Ireland in line with the OECD average in the lifetime of the next government. Improving the student to academic staff ratios will lead to a significant improvement in the quality of education and the 'student experience'.

5 Academic Freedom

IFUT calls on all parties to confirm their commitment to Section 14(2) of the Universities Act, 1997 (*A member of the academic staff of a university shall have the freedom, within the law, in his or her teaching, research and any other activities either in or outside the university, to question and test received wisdom, to put forward new ideas and to state controversial or unpopular opinions and shall not be disadvantaged, or subject to less favorable treatment by the university, for the exercise of that freedom.*)