



A Word from the President

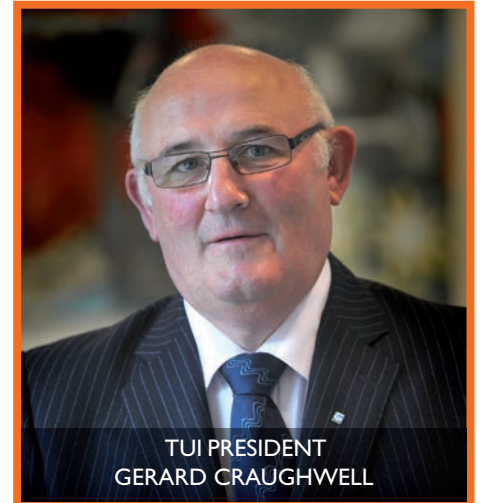
Budget day, 2012, was another black day for Irish education. The cut in staffing to Further Education/PLC courses, whether in dedicated PLC colleges or post-primary schools, is both vicious and foolhardy. These cuts place intolerable pressure on a sector which for many years has been creaking at the seams; a sector that was already understaffed before this latest reckless and retrograde cut. The increase announced in the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) from 17:1 to 19:1 will lead to a loss of some 200 whole-time equivalent (WTE) posts. These 200 WTE posts represent in excess of 400 teachers who will lose their jobs or a significant proportion of their hours.

If we are forced to accept the equalisation of the PTR between PLC colleges and second level, retaining the cap for PLC schools is now inexplicable. TUI will insist that the cap is removed allowing the colleges to return the actual numbers attending courses and

ensure staffing levels that reflect those numbers.

A substantial number of the students who enter FE/PLC courses need particular assistance and many of the cutting-edge courses provided for them are staffed by fixed-term teachers. Apart from the serious educational effects, it makes no economic sense to consign so many highly-qualified teachers to the dole. It is entirely illogical to target teachers who devise and deliver innovative, labour-market-focused courses, aimed, in line with government policy, at assisting the unemployed. It is not just anti-education, it is anti-jobs. TUI has sought an urgent meeting with the Minister for Education and Skills in order to impress on him that the increase in class size for FE/PLC schools will have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable and marginalised students, and that he must not proceed with this short-sighted and regressive policy.

The change to the PTR is not the only budgetary measure which will hurt the sector. The Programme for Government promised to expand eligibility for the Back to Education allowance. However, instead, students are to suffer a reduction to training allowances. Participants in VTOS, Youthreach and FÁS further education courses who move from Jobseekers' payments will no longer have their new payments increased to a maximum of €188 per week. Instead, the standard maximum rate for those under 25 years of age will be €160 per week. This cut coupled with the €200 fee introduced in the last budget, will put second-chance education or up-skilling out of the reach of many. Capitation rates in FE/PLC colleges and VTOS are also being reduced by 2%.



TUI PRESIDENT
GERARD CRAUGHWELL

Changes to maternity leave for teachers will mean that from May 1st 2013 teachers will not be entitled to accrue days in lieu for planned school closures. Any holidays accumulated by teachers on maternity leave up to April 30th 2013 will be counted for days in lieu, up to a maximum of 30 days. TUI will seek a common position with the other teaching unions to remove this unequal treatment. TUI will work to ensure that women teachers are no worse off with regard to maternity leave than women in other public service posts.

With respect to the third level sector TUI has welcomed the commitment by the Government to begin work on the new Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) campus at Grangegorman. However the registration fee increases, from its current €2,250 to €2,500 rising to €3,000 by 2015, will impact severely on students from lower and middle income families intending to take up third level courses.

It seems to me that the Minister cannot expect teachers' cooperation with his 'reform' agenda while he decimates the pay, conditions and employment prospects of teachers. He is taking advantage of teachers and lecturers. It is time for him to stop doing so and the union will make every effort to bring this to his realisation.

Season's Greetings

to all TUI members and thanks for your valued participation in your union



In lieu of sending Christmas cards this year the Teachers' Union of Ireland has donated to St Vincent de Paul



Budget 2013

Budget 2013 is the sixth successive austerity Budget to be introduced in Ireland. Apart from general budget measures a number of the Budgetary cuts will have a specific impact on the education sector and on TUI members.

There will be an increase in class size for PLC courses and cuts to income supports for unemployed people who take up further education and training programmes. These cuts unfairly target vulnerable and marginalised learners. The TUI President and General Secretary have written to the Minister for Education and Skills requesting an urgent meeting to discuss the cuts to further education.

Changes to maternity leave for teachers, which will result in teachers no longer receiving time in lieu for holidays after May 1st 2013 are extremely regrettable. TUI is very concerned that the measures target teachers only. When the maternity leave changes were announced TUI officials immediately expressed their concerns directly to the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Of course this is a cross-union issue and TUI is engaging with the other teachers unions as a matter of urgency.

The decision to introduce PRSI payments for low paid workers is a regressive step. It will have a disproportionate impact on young teachers, many of whom are employed on part-time hours and low incomes.

The increase in the pupil teacher ratio (PTR) in fee paying schools is to be welcomed. However, TUI believes this is a token measure which does not address the fundamental problem of the State sponsoring privilege in the form of €100 million per annum in teacher allocation for fee paying schools. TUI has consistently called for fee-paying schools – aside from minority faith schools - to be required to repay the full cost of the teacher allocation which it receives from the State from the fee income they collect, subject to retention of such

income equivalent to the capitation grant that a school of similar size in the state system would receive.

TUI welcomes the commitment by the Government to begin work on the new Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) campus at Grangegorman. However, the capital investment must be matched with appropriate staffing numbers.

The main education measures announced in Budget 2013 are as follows:

- Class sizes at second level remain unchanged. In DEIS schools this figure is 18.25:1 and in mainstream schools it is 19:1.
- There will be a net increase of 450 posts at second level in 2013 due to an increase in the student population.
- The PTR for PLC programmes will be increased from 17:1 to 19:1. This will result in a reduction of 200 WTE teaching posts.
- There will be a two point increase in PTR in fee-paying schools, up to 23:1 from 21:1.
- Arrangements for maternity and adoptive leave-in-lieu (up to 30 days) that currently apply to teachers and SNAs are to be ended. Any days in lieu accumulated up to April 30th 2013 will be granted in the normal manner but from May 1st 2013 onwards, no additional days in lieu will be accrued. The statutory 26 weeks paid maternity leave (24 weeks paid adoptive leave) and the 16 weeks unpaid leave that applies to all workers is unaffected.
- Teachers will be referred to the occupational health service after four weeks of sick leave, rather than the current twelve weeks (this was already signalled as part of the revised sick leave scheme).
- There will be a reduction in income supports for jobseekers who enrol in VTOS, Youthreach and FAS training schemes. Currently Jobseeker payments (personal rate) are

increased to the maximum €188 per week, in cases where their jobseeker payment was less than this. From January 2013 jobseekers who move on to these schemes will remain on their existing rate of payment. However, people under 25 will continue to have their payment increased up to a maximum of €160.

- There will be a reduction of €13.2 million in the 2013 VEC funding allocation. But there will be no reduction in service as VECs will be required to manage within their existing cash reserves on hand which are equivalent to this reduction.
- There will be a reduction of €25 million in the 2013 allocation to Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). But the institutions will be expected to deliver the same level of student services and manage this reduction through the use of existing cash reserves held which are equivalent to this reduction.
- At third level the student contribution will rise by €250 in 2013, 2014 and 2015, to a maximum of €3,000.
- There will be a 3% reduction in the income thresholds used when calculating entitlement to student grants in 2013.
- €3 million has been allocated to fund the proposed new Junior Cycle Framework in 2013.
- As a consequence of Budget 2012 capitation rates for second level schools and FE/PLC colleges will be reduced by 2% in 2013.

Other measures that will affect TUI members:

- The employee PRSI-Free Allowance of €127 per week will be abolished from January 2013 for all those earnings more than €352 per week. Employees who earn €352 or less per week continue to have no liability to make a PRSI contribution and are not affected by the abolition of the weekly PRSI-Free Allowance.

- The Maternity Benefit portion of maternity leave pay will be treated as taxable income from July 1st 2013 but will be exempt from the Universal Social Charge (USC).
- Child benefit is being reduced by €10 per month, to €130 for the first, second and third eligible child and €140 for the fourth or any subsequent children.
- A half-year Local Property Tax will be payable in 2013 with a full year payable in subsequent years. The tax will be charged at 0.18% of market value up to €1 million.
- There will be a once-off pre-retirement option to withdraw up to 30% of the value of funded

Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) to pension. Any sum withdrawn will be liable to tax at an individual's marginal rate. The option to withdraw will be available for 3 years from the passing of Finance Bill 2013 which is likely to be in March or April of next year.

I am a single part-time teacher recently qualified (15 hours per week). My annual salary is €19,500. I currently rent an apartment and have no children. I drive a 2004 1.4 engine car.

	Loss per annum
Income Tax	€0.00
PRSI	€264.16
Universal social charge	€0.00
Property Tax	€0.00
Childrens Allowance	€0.00
Car Tax	€29.00
Total	€293.16

I am married with 2 children aged 9 and 12. I have worked as a full time teacher for the last 14 years, my spouse is a homemaker. We own our home worth approx €290,000 and we have one car, 2009 1.6 engine.

	Loss per annum
Income Tax	€0.00
PRSI	€264.16
Universal social charge	€0.00
Property Tax	€247.50*
Childrens Allowance	€240.00
Car Tax	€60.00
Total	€811.66

I am cohabiting with my partner and we have 3 children, aged 7, 9 and 12. I work full-time as a lecturer in an IoT. My partner works part time in the private sector and earns €30,000 per annum. We own our home worth approx €360,000 and we have two cars (a 2009 1.6 engine) and a 2006 1.4 engine.

	Loss per annum
Income Tax	€0.00
PRSI	€528.32
Universal social charge	€0.00
Property Tax	€337.50*
Childrens Allowance	€456.00
Car Tax	€89.00
Total	€1,410.82

I am a single individual. I work as a lecturer in an IoT, full time. I own my own apartment worth approx €260,000 and drive a 2009 1.6 engine.

	Loss per annum
Income Tax	€0.00
PRSI	€246.16
Universal social charge	€0.00
Property Tax	€247.50*
Childrens Allowance	€0.00
Car Tax	€60.00
Total	€553.66

I am a retired teacher with 40 years pensionable service and am 72. I have a Pension of €34,000. I am married with 2 adult children. I own my own home worth approx €510,000. I drive a 2010 1.3 engine car.

	Loss per annum
Income Tax	€0.00
PRSI	€0.00
Universal social charge	€0.00
Property Tax	€472.50*
Childrens Allowance	€0.00
Car Tax	€45.00
Total	€517.50

* 6 months for 2013.

Consultative conference on Junior Cycle

In opening the consultative conference on December 1st 2012, the TUI President stated that the primary aim was to hear and listen to the views of members. The brief of the invited speakers was to provide information regarding the framework and to stimulate discussion.

Anne Looney, CEO of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) outlined the framework proposals and said that under the new Junior Cycle there will be a greater focus on skills and greater curriculum variety. Addressing concerns that short courses would become a 'free for all', she said there will still be a national curriculum and all subjects will be specified by NCCA but there will be supported opportunities for local level curriculum development. It has been shown that if schools have a little more flexibility they can work better for their students, she said.

Ms Looney referred to the concept of "school-focused moderation" with professional groups of teachers working together on moderation standards. The 40% school-based assessment will be for externally specified tasks at specific times. It will be marked by teachers and a marking scheme will be provided. This is not to be confused with continuous assessment which is not proposed.

Professor Ciaran Sugrue, Chair of Education in UCD, told the conference that continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers under the new programme must be relevant and rigorous. He also said that the support and resources to enable change must be equivalent to the change demanded. Furthermore, if the reform of Junior Cycle is a priority then other things have to be less so.



"You cannot expect people to expand their time, effort and energy infinitely. That is not the real world," he said.

He pointed to a concern that devolving the certificate to the level of the school means there is no longer a level playing field. The new programme – despite its positives - has the potential to create further division between those who have and those who don't, he warned.

TUI Education and Research Officer, Bernie Judge, told the conference that the challenge for TUI is to identify the areas about which we have legitimate concerns and to challenge and generate compelling argument relating to these concerns.

Ms Judge also highlighted the anxieties and concerns of TUI members regarding the assessment processes that have come to the fore as a result of the Minister's decision to abolish state certification of the terminal exam.

TUI members are innovators and have always had an openness to ensuring that curricula and assessment are congruent, **TUI General Secretary, John MacGabhann** said. He rejected out of hand the glib characterisation of teachers as recalcitrant, stuck in the mud, obstructionists.

Mr MacGabhann outlined the political context. Reform of Junior Cycle forms

part of and is mandated by the Programme for Government. The Minister's decision has the support of political parties, as well as the representative group for parents, he said.

He reasserted TUI policy which he described as valid and practical. TUI is open to appropriate modes of assessment but subject to professional standards in respect of external moderation, in-service training/CPD, time and payment, where appropriate.

TUI has no objection, in principle, to teachers assessing their own students but we do insist on appropriate boundaries, the maintenance of standards, provision of resources and a system which does not cause teachers to collapse under its weight.

The new Junior Cycle "cannot lead to a further layering of workload, or erosion of teachers' professional time, or diversion of teachers from the primary teaching function, or erosion of teachers' personal time. Teachers are already going home laden down with additional work", the General Secretary said.

A number of the key note speeches are available in full for members to view on the TUI website and the TUI facebook page.



Feedback from members

TUI members who attended the consultative conference provided valuable feedback and insight that TUI will use to inform future engagement on Junior Cycle reform. Contributions by members were measured and reasoned and reflected a wide diversity of opinions.

Members highlighted a lack of trust that the political establishment would deliver on resource and other commitments under the proposed reform. Concerns were expressed that the educational motivations for reform have been overtaken by an austerity agenda. Overall it was felt that there is an information gap that needs to be filled by the Department of Education and Skills.

Members criticised the unilateral nature of the Minister for Education and Skills' decision to abolish state certification. This has raised doubts about the integrity, validity and reliability of the assessment process. Delegates expressed strong concern that, in the absence of external moderation, the maintenance and monitoring of standards would be very difficult. There was a preference expressed for the retention of state certification by the State Exams Commission (SEC) or another statutory body.

Concerns were raised that school-based assessment would mean continuous assessment. Anne Looney of the NCCA said this would not be the case and acknowledged that continuous assessment would have very significant workload and administrative implications. Members also identified potential tensions or difficulties in assessing certain students for certification.

A key issue discussed was the capacity of teachers and schools to manage the proposed new Junior Cycle and the associated administration on top of existing workloads. It was pointed out that the annualised hours worked by Irish teachers is well above the OECD average.

TUI members from the further and adult education sector stated that students and teachers in this sector have not been considered in the proposals. In some settings the Junior Cycle is completed in one year. The effects of the Junior Cycle proposals in terms of workload for learners and teachers need to be considered if lifelong learning is to have real meaning, they said.

TUI members also voiced strong disquiet regarding short courses. Although information is available with regard to hours – and Anne Looney confirmed that

the proposed hours are inclusive of assessment – teachers have no information on the content or topics of short courses. They also questioned how and by whom short course would be devised and delivered?

It was suggested that CSP and SPHE, which are key in the holistic development of students, would be optional as short courses and would fall by the wayside. Anne Looney stated that in practice SPHE would be an essential component if the required 'statements of learning' are to be covered and that the hours for SPHE would actually increase from 70 to 100 hours.

Members asserted that the excellence and professionalism of teaching must remain central to the public education system and must not be undermined. Several speakers identified the casualisation of the profession and the unequal treatment of new teachers as leading to an undermining of the profession. TUI members also stated that the subject base should be maintained. It was agreed that TUI and its sister union should work closely together on matters of common concern regarding Junior Cycle reform. Those present generally agreed that TUI should take a proactive role in shaping and designing the process and should not be passive recipients of the proposals.

The consultative conference is the beginning of a national consultative process on Junior Cycle reform which will remain open into the new year. TUI urges members to organise workplace meetings and participate in branch meetings to consider the proposals and their implications and provide feedback to TUI head office.

Restructuring of TUI Areas

At the consultative conference on the afternoon of December 1st 2012, on the 'restructuring of TUI areas with reference to Education and Training Boards (ETBs)', delegates were informed of a proposed restructuring option. Delegates provided feedback and raised several issues and concerns about the suggested model for restructuring of areas. A particular issue raised was the very large size of some of the suggested areas. The President and General Secretary undertook to take account of these views and concerns in drafting a motion for Annual Congress.



TUI DELEGATES AT THE CONFERENCE

Talks on extension to Croke Park Agreement

The TUI executive is to formulate an agenda and strategy for any future talks on an extension to the Croke Park Agreement. At a special executive meeting on the 30th of November, the executive agreed that if talks are to proceed they must have a strong union input and cannot simply become a process of unions listening to the demands of the Government side. The TUI executive is also concerned to ensure there will be no overlap of agreements (i.e. Croke Park and a Croke Park extension) resulting in additional impositions on teachers and lecturers.

Among the priorities of TUI are the preservation of the pay and pensions of members, protection against the imposition of compulsory redundancies, tackling the casualisation of the teaching and lecturing professions and restoring the pay scales of newly qualified teachers.

On the 19th of November, unions were invited by the Government to enter discussions with representatives of public service management on a possible extension of the Croke Park Agreement. The public service unions agreed to meet public service management, on a without prejudice

basis, for an initial briefing regarding the Government's rationale for seeking discussions. On the 28th of November, TUI was represented at a meeting between public service unions and representatives of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and other Government Departments. The Department side set out a requirement for a further €1 billion of savings from the public sector pay bill between 2013 and 2015, on the basis that envisaged growth had not materialised and that, as a result the deficit to be closed had increased by this amount.

The union of Public Expenditure and Reform demonstrated that very substantial savings and efficiencies have already been contributed by public servants under the Croke Park Agreement.

In its first two years, the Agreement has already delivered annual savings of €1.5 billion across the public service. In education, an additional 900,000 hours annually are being provided by second-level teachers. In the Institute of Technology sector the teaching hours being delivered by lecturers have sharply increased. This increased productivity is in addition to the

pension levy and pay cuts which have reduced the take-home pay of serving teachers by as much as 20%.

TUI used the opportunity of the meeting with public service management to highlight the issue of members in second and third level who are currently employed on part-time hours under temporary and fixed-term contracts and who are living on extremely low pay, in effective income poverty. The union also pointed out the length of time (up to ten years) it now takes teachers and lecturers to secure permanent posts because legislation that was designed to protect part-time and fixed-term workers is currently being used by some public sector employers to undermine their rights.

It should be noted that no proposals have been tabled by Government at this point and that no discussion of proposals has taken place. To date TUI has not engaged in any negotiation on an extension to the Croke Park Agreement. Therefore the Croke Park Agreement remains in place and unchanged.



TUI MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS AT THE ANTI-AUSTERITY MARCH IN NOVEMBER

Institute News

The Minister's Perspective on the Reform of Higher Education

The following is a summary of the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn's speech of November 22nd, 2012 setting out his perspective on a number of key policy issues concerning Higher Education reform.

Strengthening our university system

There are 15,000 universities in the world and all seven Irish universities are in the top 600 overall and DIT features in the top tier as well, according to Minister Quinn. He stated that "given the difficult circumstances facing the country, there are challenges in continuing to provide the level of service, particularly with numbers increasing."

Consolidation, strengthening and evolution of the IOT sector – why it is still so important

A core objective, according to the Minister, will be to protect and enhance the role of the IOT sector in supporting enterprise, underpinning diversity and promoting access and participation. The Minister endorsed the criteria set out by the HEA for the establishment of a Technological University. He stated that "the final decision on applications for technological university status will be made on academic, not on political

grounds". He also stated that he wants institutes "that do not become technological universities to concentrate on their core mission of developing close links with the local and regional business community and giving the best possible quality of education to their students".

Achieving critical mass through Consolidation and Collaboration and the development of Regional Clusters

The Minister highlighted that "there is a need to achieve critical mass through consolidation and collaboration and the development of Regional Clusters." "The challenges facing our institutions in achieving greater coherence and collaboration were clearly identified in the report of the International Expert Panel appointed by the HEA", stated the Minister. But in welcoming the Panel's insights the Minister stated that he disagrees with some of its proposed solutions. He stated that he does not envisage forced mergers of any of the 7 universities nor does he envisage "institutes of technology merging with existing universities or mirroring their provision on a smaller scale."

Release capacity and increase sustainability of the system

The Minister stated that he wanted "to acknowledge the flexibility that higher education institutions have displayed in

responding to the increases in student-staff ratios, necessitated by the worsening economic conditions". But he added, "we will have to manage and manage well in leaner times and this will demand greater productivity and innovation in how we deliver Higher Education".

Good Governance for our Higher Education Sector

The introduction of the necessary legislation to underpin the reform objectives was promised by the Minister. He stated that "this process will include taking a hard look at the need to strengthen the powers of the HEA" and the introduction of "legislation to reform the internal governance structures of higher education institutions". He also stated that "greater clarity of the relationships, roles and responsibilities of the Department, the HEA and individual institutions" was required.

Implications for the Strategic Direction of HEIs

Minister Ruairi Quinn stated that he "expects to have the HEA's advice on a new configuration for higher education by early Spring" and the Government will then take decisions so that each institution and the system as a whole knows where it is heading.

ETUCE motion on Higher Education and Research

The 2012 conference of the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) was held in November. TUI General Secretary John MacGabhann spoke on the resolution 'Fighting the Crisis an Essential Contribution of Higher Education and Research'. He informed the conference of the damaging effects of attacks on pay and conditions in Irish higher education institutions. He instanced the increased use of so-called 'teaching only' contracts which he described as "a contradiction in terms".

Mr MacGabhann referred to the fact that the vast majority of academic staff appointed in recent years are in precarious, fixed term employment. Delegates at the conference were shocked and incredulous when told of the offer of a 'zero hours' contract to a lecturer who had satisfied the service requirement for award of a contract of indefinite duration. The TUI delegates supported the wide-ranging resolution that calls for recognition of the value and contribution of higher education in tackling the economic crisis.



JOHN MACGABHANN

DON'T RENEW YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE UNTIL YOU REVIEW IT.

We are fast approaching the busiest time for health insurance and most consumers are unaware of some of the key changes to their cover, or more importantly, some of the special offers now available. Almost 850,000 members will be receiving their renewal notices in the first three months of 2013 and they may be in for a shock as most policies have increased substantially since their last renewal.

More importantly, all insurers now operate 'Annual Contracts' which means that you could find yourself locked into your existing contract for a further 12 months if you don't act now. You might think that you can simply exit your contract mid-term. However, some of the insurers may charge you financial penalties for breach of contract!

However, there is some potential good news that makes reviewing your cover worthwhile, e.g.

- GloHealth have now entered the market with some really attractive options. They allow you to personalise your cover to suit your requirements and all children under 3 years of age are free on some of their mainstream plans
- Aviva Health have discounted one of their mid-range plans for December, which means a saving of €100 for each adult and child (aged 5-17) either joining or renewing during this period
- Similarly, Laya Healthcare have discounted one of their mid-range plans to give a 50% discount for all children and students joining or renewing during this period.

If you are finding the cost of your health cover prohibitive, the good news is that all four health insurers have offerings from as little as €485 for basic adult cover (public hospitals) or €795 for mid-range adult cover (private hospitals). Don't cancel your cover without checking these out.

One of the key myths amongst consumers is that public hospital treatment is free, which is not the case. Unless you hold a medical card, going public will cost you a daily rate of €75 to a maximum of €750 per annum regardless of whether you're an adult or child. Consumers often think that they'll be able to bear the cost of 'routine' hospital treatment themselves should they fall ill. Given that private treatment in a public hospital will cost you approximately €1,000 per night, this will be beyond most people's means. A routine admission could easily cost €7,500 to €10,000 and this assumes no follow up treatment will be required.

Don't miss the deadline.

All TUI members can avail of Cornmarket's free comparison service which covers all four health insurers: VHI Healthcare, Laya Healthcare, Aviva Health and GloHealth.

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