

Cónaidhm Éireannach na Múinteoirí Ollscoile/Aontas Múinteoirí Éireann

Irish Federation of University Teachers/Teachers' Union of Ireland

PRESS STATEMENT

9 OCTOBER 2009

TUI and IFUT dismiss ESRI research as 'patently flawed'

In a joint statement today, the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) and Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) rejected as 'misleading' and 'flawed' the findings of an ESRI survey on a pay differential between public and private higher education staff.

The latest ESRI figures on a public and private pay differential between higher education staff are extremely misleading and yet again mischievously add to the drip-feed of misinformation supporting a patently flawed agenda.

By failing to compare like with like, this piece of research is essentially redundant.

Generally, private colleges are non-unionised and invariably employ a high turnover of staff on short-term contracts on a casual basis. Staff are often professionals in their own industry and supplement their income by lecturing on their subject area for a few hours every week.

Crucially, these institutions are businesses as opposed to centres of education. Profit is always the most important outcome for their management. It follows that pay and conditions of workers are kept low by management of these businesses, regardless of any negative impact on the service to students, who are labelled as 'consumers' in the minds of management.

On the other hand, our Universities and Institutes of Technology are recognised around the world as centres of educational excellence in terms of the qualifications they provide to students and their hugely valuable research and development activities. Standards are maintained rigorously by a range of frameworks agreed between unions and management as well as by constant scrutiny from international externs. All academic staff are experts in their subject areas. Also, there is a full and comprehensive support system for students.

TUI General Secretary, Peter MacMenamin, said:

"To attempt to compare these completely different forms of employment is a pointless exercise that adds nothing but unhelpful clutter to any reasonable, intelligent public discourse."

IFUT General Secretary, Mike Jennings, said:

"It is unusual that the two unions that represent third-level combine to take a stance like this. It illustrates the level of what we see as a complete misunderstanding of the essential characteristics of a valid and internationally respected education system."

For further comment or clarification, please contact:

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