

Submission on
behalf of
INTO/ TUI to the
Public Service Pay
Commission

January 2017

Introduction

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) and the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the Public Service Pay Commission. The two unions represent 50,000 teachers and lecturers at primary level, second level, and in further and higher education. This submission is to assist the Commission in its advice to government on Public Service remuneration policy in the education sector. It addresses the factors which the Commission has stated that it will have regard to in this advice.

Teachers and lecturers, in common with other public servants, have contributed to the recovery in the Irish economy, not only through reductions in income and pensions, but also by continuing to cooperate with change and innovation in the education sector. The continued contribution of teachers and lecturers cannot be taken for granted, and proper remuneration plays a vital role in recruiting and retaining a committed teaching profession.

Unwinding of FEMPI and associated pay cuts

The submission made by the Public Services Committee (PSC) of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has comprehensively outlined the scope and sequence of the cuts to public service pay imposed by the suite of Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts (FEMPI) between 2009 and 2015, and the disimprovements in other terms and conditions which have been imposed, such as the revised public service sick leave scheme and the imposition of additional working hours. INTO and TUI endorse the PSC submission and call on the Commission to establish a road map out of the FEMPI legislation and related matters, which would be acceptable to public servants and the country at large. This can be achieved through a combination of pension levy reductions and pay restorations, and engagement with unions on other issues impacting on pay and terms and conditions.

Teachers' and lecturers' pay has been reduced through a number of associated cuts or reductions. These have had a significant and disproportionate effect on the profession. We call on the Commission to give special consideration to the following:

Reduction in New Entrant Pay

Equal pay for equal work is a core principle.

General Pay Cut for new entrants

With effect from 1 January 2011, new entrants to teaching and lecturing, in common with other new entrants to the public service, suffered a 10% pay cut.

Lower starting point

In addition, from that date, all new entrants to teaching have started on the first scale point. Prior to this, new entrants to teaching were placed either on point two or three of the scale, depending on the length of their pre-service training. This change, in and of itself, represented a significant further reduction both in starting salary and career earnings and was particular to teaching. The tables on right show that, even with current agreements, the starting salaries of teachers remain at significantly below 2008 levels.

Teachers' Starting Salary 2008 - 2018 (Primary)

Assumption: Primary teacher – B.Ed entrant (starting on point two for pre-2011 entrants) with an Honours Qualification performing Supervision and Substitution duties.

	01/09/2008	01/09/2010	01/09/2011	01/09/2012	01/09/2013	01/09/2016	01/01/2017	01/09/2017	01/01/2018
Incremental Point	33,753	31,972	27,814	30,702	30,702	31,805	32,806	34,602	35,602
Honours Qualification Allowance	5,177	4,918	4,426	n/a	n/a	n/a	Half restoration onto incremental point	Half restoration onto incremental point	Full restoration onto incremental point
Supervision and Substitution Allowance	1,769	1,769	1,592	1,592	n/a	€796 integrated into incremental point	€796 integrated into incremental point	€1,592 integrated into incremental point	€1,592 integrated into incremental point
Total	40,699	38,659	33,832	32,294	30,702	31,805	32,806	34,602	35,602

Teachers' Starting Salary 2008 - 2018 (Post-Primary)

Assumption: Post Graduate entrant with an Honours Degree Qualification and Higher Diploma in Education (Hons) performing Supervision and Substitution duties.

	01/09/2008	01/09/2010	01/09/2011	01/09/2012	01/09/2013	01/09/2016	01/01/2017	01/09/2017	01/01/2018
Incremental Point	34,909	33,041	27,814	30,702	30,702	31,805	32,806	34,602	35,602
Honours Qualification Allowance	5,177	4,918	4,426	n/a	n/a	n/a	Half restoration onto incremental point	Half restoration onto incremental point	Full restoration onto incremental point
Higher Diploma in Education (Hons)	1,301	1,236	1,112	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Supervision and Substitution Allowance	1,769	1,769	1,592	1,592	n/a	€796 integrated into incremental point	€796 integrated into incremental point	€1,592 integrated into incremental point	€1,592 integrated into incremental point
Total	43,153	40,961	34,944	32,294	30,702	31,805	32,806	34,602	35,602

Longer scale – two additional points

From 1 January 2011, two points were added at the bottom of the teachers' common basic scale. The post-2011 salary scale has 27 points whereas the pre-2011 scale has 25 points. Where those who entered teaching prior to January 2011 had started on either point two or point three of a 25-point scale – the de facto starting points (as set out on page two) – new entrants since then have started on point one of a 27-point scale. The combination of a longer scale and commencement on the first point of that scale involves a delay of three to four years in payments for post-2011 teachers, further widening the pay differential. This differential was addressed to a limited extent through the Haddington Road Agreement, in that post-2011 entrants now progress to the pre-2011 scale on a delayed basis, following two added points at the start of the scale.

For teachers, this delayed progression is of particular seriousness and significance. While the post-2011 scale is equalised with the pre-2011 scale at the top point, many teachers will never reach the top point since it requires lengthy and sustained service to do so. We believe that a 27-point scale is unique to teaching.

Effect of 2011 cut and scale adjustments

The position at this stage is that, as a result solely of the 2011 cuts and adjustments to scale and starting point – taking account of the mitigation provided for under the HRA – a new entrant starting teaching from 1 September 2016 will, over a full service career of 40 years, earn some €75,000 less than a comparable entrant who started on 1 September 2010.

The DES acknowledged the impact of this cut in its business case to DPER on the Review of Allowances in 2012 “...it is important to stress that the impact of measures taken to date (10% cut and commencement on first point of scale) have had a disproportionate impact upon new teachers. The starting pay of such new teacher entrants across the sector has been discounted by some 15% as opposed to the norm of 10% across the balance of the public service”.¹

Abolition of Allowances – February 2012

Following a review of allowances conducted by the DPER in 2011/2012, a range of allowances was abolished for public servants who entered service on or after 1 February 2012. This resulted in a further, very severe and disproportionate cut in the pensionable pay of teachers.

In order to qualify, register and practise as a teacher, a new entrant to the profession must have an appropriate primary degree and, in the case of post-primary teachers, and an increasing number of primary teachers, an appropriate post-graduate qualification.

Prior to 1 February 2012, a pensionable allowance of €4,918 had been payable to entrants to teaching who held an honours primary degree. In addition, a pensionable allowance of €1,236 was paid to those entrants who also held a Higher Diploma in Education – H.Dip. (now re-classified as a Professional Master of Education – PME), in recognition of the qualification itself, the consequent longer duration of pre-service training and the opportunity cost this involves.

Abolition of these allowances represented a further pay cut of some 17% for those who entered teaching on or after 1 February 2012, over and above the cuts applied to those who entered in the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 January 2012.

Partial Mitigation – September 2016 Agreement between the INTO/TUI and DES/DPER

In September 2016, TUI and INTO concluded an agreement with the Departments of Education and Skills and Public Expenditure and Reform which allows for re-instatement (by its incorporation into a revised scale) of the honours primary degree allowance for those appointed on or after 1 February 2012. This only addressed one significant element of the problem associated with the removal of the universal pensionable qualification allowances from new entrants from 1 February 2012.

Outstanding issue – PME/H. Dip. Allowance

However, this agreement did not address the matter of the PME/H.Dip. allowance, as is acknowledged in the following extract: “The parties also acknowledge that the issue of the payment of the H.Dip. allowance to teachers was not resolved in the current process and that the union side reserves its right to seek to have this issue considered through appropriate mechanisms”. The PME/H. Dip. is an additional required qualification for registration with the Teaching Council at post-primary level only and could not therefore be addressed by incorporation of the PME/H.Dip. allowance into the scale that is common to both primary and post-primary. It is noteworthy, however, that an increasing number of primary teachers are qualifying as teachers through a PME. This inequality requires to be dealt with by way of restoration of the allowance. The argument for restoration, we believe, is compelling. To qualify and register with the Teaching Council as a post-primary teacher, one must hold the PME/H. Dip. Qualification

Almost universally, those entering post-primary teaching hold the PME/H. Dip. at honours level. Whereas the H. Dip. in Education was a full-time one year course, the Professional Master of Education is a full-time two-year course. The additional year imposes a very substantial additional cost – some €9,000 in course fees and over €30,000 in earnings forgone. In addition, the consequential effect of the delay in accessing each point of the teachers’ common basic scale is significant.

All of this is a layered loss, over and above the raw loss of €1,236 in each year of a 40-year career (without regard to any applicable compounding effect). A new entrant will be at a loss of a further €50,000 on top of the €75,000 lost as a result of the scale point changes, bringing the aggregate loss to €125,000.

While the unions have brought the matter to the Teachers’ Conciliation Council, we would ask the PSPC to identify and address this palpable unfairness as a matter of priority. The simple fact is that unless the matter is resolved, pay equality in the profession cannot be achieved.

Outstanding issue – pay differential pre and post 2011

Moreover, the September 2016 Agreement did not address the pay disparity between those appointed on or after 1st January 2011 and those appointed before that date, observing as follows: “The parties acknowledge that the issue of the pay of January 2011 new entrants to the public service was not resolved in the current process. The parties understand that entry levels of pay will be considered by the Public Service Pay Commission, which will examine pay levels across the public service.”

We believe that this differential pay for exactly the same work is neither justifiable nor lawful. The great majority of new entrant teachers are young and we believe that it is indirectly discriminatory on the age ground to pay them less for the same work. If there was at any time an economic justification, based on emergency circumstances, for introducing lower pay rates for new entrants, that justification no longer exists. It should be noted also that, rather than applying lesser pay rates to new entrants universally across the public service, the reductions have operated only at certain grades and not at the most senior levels, even in cases where the appointee is a new entrant to the public service. Moreover, these cuts coincided with regulatory changes under the aegis of the Teaching Council and an increase of at least one year in the length of required pre-service, unpaid training. This has had the direct effect of delaying the commencement of paid employment for those entering teaching and of increasing the opportunity cost of pursuing teaching as a career.

Even with the restoration, the gap in earnings is substantial – at €75,000 – over the course of a career (for a 1/09/2016 entrant). The very lengthy teacher scales need to be shortened to address the career earnings anomaly, with the starting points on the salary scale for teachers pre – 2011 reinstated. The unions call upon the PSPC to address this core matter in their recommendations.

The unions also ask the PSPC to address this matter insofar as it affects other marker/entry grades in the education sector that similarly suffered the 10% pay cut in 2011. These grades include the Assistant Lecturer (AL) grade in the Institute of Technology sector, the Resource Person grade in the Youthreach service (in the Education and Training Board – ETB – sector) and a number of grades in further and adult education.² The scale of each of these grades was lengthened by the addition of two points at the bottom of the scale.

It is noteworthy that other cuts in the earnings of assistant lecturers in the Institute of Technology sector were also applied. Under the terms of the Haddington Road Agreement, the rate for marking a script was reduced to 75% of its previous value and the weighting for working after 6 p.m. was reduced from 1.5 to 1.25. Together, these cuts represent a significant loss of earnings for those affected. It is also noteworthy that appointment to an Assistant Lecturer position now routinely requires both a period of industrial experience and a doctoral qualification. The advertised, nominal qualification requirement rarely suffices. The de facto requirements for appointment have resulted in a later commencement age and an associated diminution in potential career earnings. This is apart altogether from the casualised nature of the employment that is frequently offered.

Submission to Public Service Pay Commission

Teachers and lecturers whose contracts offer only a fixed hourly rate of pay have also suffered as a result of cuts to the applicable hourly rates of pay arising from the pro-rata application of the 2011 pay cut.

Unless these matters are addressed, there will continue to be a lack of equity within a particular grade. This will inevitably lead to ongoing industrial relations difficulties based on a legitimate sense of grievance. ¹

Outstanding Benchmarking Award

In 2007, Section 14.15 Report of the Public Service Benchmarking Body (PSBB) made a significant pay recommendation in respect of principals and deputy principals in primary schools. The PSBB noted the differences in the allowances at primary and primary levels. This difference is set out in Table 1

Table 1

Principals of Primary Schools		Principals of Post-Primary Schools	
Category	Allowance	Category	Allowance
	€		€
1 Schools with 1-5 teachers	9,328	1 Schools with 1-3 teachers	9,328
2 Schools with 6-7 teachers	10,452	2 Schools with 4-5 teachers	10,452
3 Schools with 8-11 teachers	12,261	3 Schools with 6 teachers	12,261
4 Schools with 12-13 teachers	14,387	4 Schools with 7-8 teachers	14,387
5 Schools with 14-16 teachers	16,737	5 Schools with 9-10 teachers	16,737
6 Schools with 17-19 teachers	19,120	6 Schools with 11-12 teachers	19,120
7 Schools with 20-23 teachers	21,427	7 Schools with 13-15 teachers	21,427
8 Schools with 24-26 teachers	23,759	8 Schools with 16 teachers	23,759
9 Schools with 27-30 teachers	25,475	9 Schools with 17-19 teachers	25,475
10 Schools with 31-35 teachers	27,249	10 Schools with 20-22 teachers	27,249
11 Schools with 36+ teachers	29,833	11 Schools with 23-26 teachers	29,833
		12 Schools with 27-30 teachers	31,580
		13 Schools with 31-35 teachers	34,959
		14 Schools with 36-40 teachers	36,099
		15 Schools with 41-50 teachers	39,154
		16 Schools with 51-59 teachers	40,854
		17 Schools with 60+ teachers	42,550

Having examined the submissions made by the INTO in respect of their claim for parity with post-primary principals, the PSBB considered that the differences in the allowances at primary and post-primary level was greater than is justified and that an improvement in the relative position of primary principals was warranted, particularly in the case of principals and deputy principals in smaller schools, and a revised system of allowances was recommended. (Table 2)

Table 2

Principals of Primary Schools		Principals of Post-Primary Schools	
Category	Allowance	Category	Allowance
	€		€
1 Schools with 1-7 teachers	12,261	1 Schools with 1-6 teachers	12,261
2 Schools with 8-11 teachers	14,387	2 Schools with 7-8 teachers	14,387
3 Schools with 12-13 teachers	16,737	3 Schools with 9-10 teachers	16,737
4 Schools with 14-16 teachers	19,120	4 Schools with 11-12 teachers	19,120
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9 Schools with 31-35 teachers	29,833	9 Schools with 23-26 teachers	29,833
10 Schools with 36+ teachers	31,580	10 Schools with 27-30 teachers	31,580
		11 Schools with 31-35 teachers	34,959
		12 Schools with 36-40 teachers	36,099
		13 Schools with 41-50 teachers	39,154
		14 Schools with 51-59 teachers	40,854
		15 Schools with 60+ teachers	42,550

(It should be noted that the FEMPI pay cuts of 2010 reduced these allowances and the scale for primary schools in Table 2 now runs from €12,238 to €31,520) The payment of the revised rate of allowance was scheduled for payment in full, to principals and deputy principals in primary schools with effect from 1/09/2008, but the award remains outstanding. The payment of the award was raised by INTO at every possible opportunity, but without success and the failure to pay it has become a huge source of grievance for primary principals and deputy principals.

In the intervening period, the job of the principal at primary level has become increasingly complex. The majority of those who would have benefitted most from the increase are the 56% of primary teaching principals, who carry the same level of responsibility and accountability as their colleagues in larger schools, but who also carry out full-time teaching duties. The demands of the legislation on principals – for example the statutory functions set out at Sections 22, 23 and 24 of the Education Acts (1998-2012) – do not distinguish between principals on the basis of school size or sector. The administration and responsibility associated with the inclusion of children with special education needs has been largely carried by principal teachers. In the same period as the award has been outstanding, the in-school management teams in primary schools have been decimated through the moratorium on appointments to such posts, which has seen the loss of over 4,600 promoted posts in the primary sector alone. Although evidence on the level of applications for principals' posts is not collected systematically, at least eight primary principalships were the subject of more than one round of advertisement in 2016 (from [educationposts.ie](http://www.educationposts.ie)).³

The case for the payment of the award has been made and won at an independent body. The failure to implement this award has the potential to undermine members' confidence in pay review bodies. Implementation of the Benchmarking award must be a priority in the context of the much stronger economy.

The failure to restore the payment is an unfair and unjust measure, which impacts on a section of INTO members, about whom Minister Bruton recently stated "We are lucky in Ireland to have such a dedicated and committed teaching profession, with school leaders of the highest calibre".⁴ It is imperative that these words are now matched with appropriate remuneration. We call on the Commission to advise the Government that the payment of the outstanding award is a key element of the unwinding of FEMPI.²

² 3 Of 202 Primary Principalships advertised on www.educationposts.ie in 2016

⁴ 12 December, 2016 - Minister Announces Post Graduate Programme in School Leadership - See more at: <http://education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2016-Press-Releases/PR2016-12-12.html#sthash.2oqKfxq9.dpuf>

Other outstanding awards/ claims

The Teachers' Conciliation Council is established to provide a mechanism to resolve pay and other claims for teachers, in the absence of access to the dispute resolution mechanisms of the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court. However, the prohibition on the payment of cost increasing claims during the period of austerity has prevented the resolution of pay anomalies in the normal manner. For example, the unions recently progressed a claim for the payment of the Secure Unit/Disturbed Adolescent Allowance to teachers who work in secure units/secure care settings. The Arbitrator, Mr Dan Murphy, found that the teachers in the schools associated with the secure units should also receive the allowance paid to the teachers in Oberstown and social care staff in the secure units. However, he went on to note a DPER letter which stated that "minor claims related to remuneration, were precluded under the provisions of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No. 2) Act, 2009" and concluded that "the parties should consult with each other on the options that may be open to them to give consideration to the assessment reached on the industrial relations substance of the case above at an appropriate time and in appropriate circumstances". This clearly demonstrates the impact of the FEMPI legislation on this and other legitimate salary claims.

We call on the PSPC to provide a roadmap towards payment of outstanding third party awards

Pensions

INTO and TUI endorse the submission of the ICTU Public Services Committee to the Commission on the matter of pensions (sections 22-26 of PSC Submission). There have been repeated claims by Government representatives that the value of public service pensions has increased in recent years. That is not the case. In fact, there have been several adjustments to reduce the cost to the Exchequer.

Amongst the most significant of these were:

- (a) the 1995 integration with the State Pension;
- (b) the 2004 changes, raising the retirement age by 10 years (to 65) for new entrant teachers;
- (c) the introduction of the PRD (Pension Levy) in 2009; and
- (d) the putting in place of a career average pension scheme for new entrants from 1 January 2013.

The cumulative effect of these changes – incrementally reducing benefits while maintaining the level of normal employee contribution and introducing the PRD – has been very significant. The only sense in which the value of public service pensions may be perceived to have increased is by comparison with the devastation of occupational pensions in the private sector. Measures of value of this nature encourage an unacceptable “race to the bottom” in pension provision.

Actuarial Review of Value of Career Average scheme for Teachers

The introduction of the career average pension scheme has a particular effect in eroding the value of teachers’ pensions since the existence of a 27-point salary scale means that relatively few years, if any, of a teacher’s career are spent at the top of the scale. Career average has less serious implications in the case of a worker with a short pay scale.

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INTO and TUI recently (January 2017) asked Trident Consulting to assess the value to new entrant teachers of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme. Having examined the scheme using actuarial assumptions, Trident described its value as “modest”. In typical teacher examples, the total annual cost of benefits ranges from 10.5% to 11.6% of salary. Of this cost, Trident found that a teacher at present pays 9.8% - 9.9% between pension contribution and PRD (Pension Levy).

These findings totally discredit statements about increased “value” of pensions. Under the Single Scheme the employer is contributing less than 2% per annum to a teacher’s pension (less than 7% if the PRD is not regarded as part of the employee contribution), contrasting with the typical public service employer contribution of 20% found in the *Report of the Public Service Benchmarking Body* (December 2007, p. 74).

Addressing the imbalance of contributions is all the more urgent since there are now thousands of teachers in the Single Scheme. The Baseline Report (November 2014) on the DPER website indicates that at end-April 2014, 58% of scheme

Submission to Public Service Pay Commission

members were in the education sector and that 9,322 members of the scheme were school staff. We estimate that at this stage there are some 20,000 education sector employees in the Single Scheme.

It is unacceptable that teachers should be required to contribute disproportionately to a scheme from which they get very little value. The so called "Single Scheme" is not a single scheme if its structure specifically disadvantages those such as teachers with longer pay scales.

In light of the foregoing, we call on the Commission to recommend:

- (a) that, with immediate effect, those in the Single Pension Scheme are no longer required to pay the pension levy (PRD); and
- (b) that the State authorities be required to carry out an actuarial review on independently agreed assumptions of the value of career average pensions for workers, such as teachers, with longer pay scales.

Commitment to Ongoing Public Service Reform

Teachers and lecturers at all levels in the education system have demonstrated commitment to ongoing public service reform. In the education sector, this has resulted in a high level of public confidence in the education system. The recent Public Sector Trends 2016 (IPA)⁵ stated that education is Ireland's best scoring public service, in terms of public perception. Ireland performs significantly above average in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in reading, science and mathematics.

Primary Education

All through the recession primary teachers continued to cooperate with reforms in education as part of general public service reform. Teachers' commitment to enhancing education provision underpins their approach to fulfilling their responsibilities as primary teachers. Specifically, primary teachers have embraced revised curriculum developments, currently the Primary Language Curriculum, but to include mathematics and other subjects in future. Primary teachers have implemented the use of new report cards and the Education Passport, a reporting system on children's progress and achievement for transfer to post-primary education. Primary teachers have taken a more active role in supporting their new colleagues by upskilling in mentoring as part of the National Induction Programme for teachers, as well as supporting and advising student teachers on extended placements in their schools. Primary teachers have embraced inclusion and support the enrolment of children with special educational needs, children for whom English is an additional language, and migrant children. Primary teachers are implementing a new approach to allocating additional teachers to schools to support children with special educational needs, an approach which places additional demands on principal teachers and leadership teams at school level. Primary teachers continue to cooperate with revised arrangements for school inspections and evaluations.

Post Primary (TUI)

Very significant reform in the post-primary sector has been led and facilitated by teachers. Perhaps the most profound change has been in the composition of the student cohort, which is now far more diverse than was previously the case, including, as it does, increased numbers of international students (for many of whom English is not a first language) and, in pursuance of the national policy of inclusion, students with special educational needs in integrated mainstream settings. The increased diversity in the student cohort has necessitated major pedagogical development – particularly in relation to differentiated³ and customised teaching and learning. This has been pioneered and implemented by teachers. The members of the Teachers' Union of Ireland are currently implementing a key reform at Junior Cycle, having negotiated a comprehensive agreement in this regard with the Department of Education and Skills. Teachers

³ 5 Public Sectors Trends 2016, Research Paper No. 19-Institute of Public Administration

are also engaged in a variety of initiatives and developments that strengthen the collegial and collaborative working environment. These involve the National Induction Programme and a more integrated, coherent and innovative approach to School Self Evaluation and review. Increasingly, teachers are engaged in initiatives that address the needs of marginalised students, whether they arise from behavioural issues, family circumstances, ethnicity or sexual identity. In this regard there is demonstrably greater connectivity between schools and the communities they serve as well as enhanced collaboration and communication between schools and other agencies. All of these developments have proceeded in spite of severe resource constraints and cutbacks.

Further and Adult Education (TUI)

The Further Education and Training (FET) Sector has seen major restructuring in recent years; the establishment of Education and Training Boards (ETBs); the integration of FÁS (the National Training Agency into ETBs); the establishment of QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) and the establishment of SOLAS, a body charged with funding, co-ordinating and monitoring a range of FET provision. All these developments have significantly changed the work practices of FET staff at a time when a public service moratorium placed severe constraints on the sector and staff were required to work additional hours for no additional payment.

In 2015, 131,805 places were offered under FET full-time courses with over 350,000 citizens in total engaging in FET training. The FET sector has cooperated with this increase in learner numbers whilst complying with new assessment policies and procedures, including programme development, and establishing protocols for recognising the prior learning of our students. FET staff have ensured that all Irish citizens have the opportunity to access, transfer within and progress through the National Framework of Qualifications. FET staff have championed the plight of the disadvantaged and under-privileged adult learner at a time when resources were constrained within our schools/colleges and centres. New organisational design structures are currently being negotiated within the sector and new quality assurance procedures are being developed which will, once again, result in a change in the work practices of FET staff.

Higher Education (TUI)

Academic staff in the Institute of Technology sector have implemented change that is transformative in its effect. Because of the dynamic nature of the service provided and the need for programme provision to be responsive to regional and national economic priorities, the pattern of change is organic and ongoing. This has been the case in spite of what has been widely recognised, not least by Government, as a crisis in funding and other resourcing since 2008. Savage cuts in funding have had a devastating effect on higher education in Ireland. In Institutes of Technology alone, funding fell by €190m (35%) between 2008 and 2015. Over the same time period, student numbers rose by over 21,400 (32%) while 535 (9.5%) lecturing positions were lost.

Meanwhile, the OECD Education At A Glance (September 2016) indicators confirm that the ratio of students to teaching staff in Irish third level institutions is 20:1, significantly above the international average of 17:1.

Cutbacks have had a serious effect on the working conditions of lecturers and on student experience, with larger class sizes and less access to laboratories, equipment, materials and tutorials. Notwithstanding this, the Institutes of Technology enjoy a reputation for excellence and, as a result of the innovative ethic of the academic staff, have continued to expand the menu of programmes they provide which now range from Apprenticeships at level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications to Doctoral programmes at level 10

Recruitment and Retention

The Teaching Council, which has statutory responsibility for advising the Minister on Teacher supply, established a Technical Working Group to look at issues around teacher supply. The Council sent a report to the Minister in December 2015, but the advice remains unpublished.

There is evidence that teacher education courses continue to attract a high calibre of applicant. The Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Provision in Ireland (2012) noted “the high calibre of entrants to ITE in Ireland and concluded that the academic standard of applicants is amongst the highest, if not the highest, in the world.”⁶ It is critical that teaching as a profession continues to recruit from the brightest and the best to ensure continuing improved outcomes for students.

Remuneration is a key driver for recruitment and it is notable that the period 2011-2013 saw the first fall-off in demand for primary teacher education courses. This coincided with reductions in teacher pay, most significantly for new entrant teachers.

At post-primary there is evidence of teacher shortages in an increasing number of subject areas. Particularly acute problems are reported in respect of Irish, Home Economics, Modern Languages, Physics and, as the construction sector recovers, in the Materials Technology and Design subjects.

In recent years there has been a resurgence in recruitment of Irish teachers to work abroad, in particular in the UK and the Middle East. Over 1,500 primary teachers are on career break in the 2016/17 school year, and approximately 700 primary teachers leave the primary payroll each year, other than for retirement. The 2016/17 school year has seen a shortage of substitutes available to cover for illness and other short-term absences, despite almost 2,000 teachers completing teacher education courses. Similar shortages are apparent at post-primary level and have impacted negatively on schools’ capacity to facilitate attendance by staff at continuing professional development (e.g. for Junior Cycle) and/or the release of teachers for the purpose of conducting Oral examinations for the State Examinations Commission.

In a survey conducted by the Guardian newspaper in 2016, 46% of teachers in England said that they were planning to leave the profession in the next five years.⁷ The English teacher unions – the NUT, the NASUWT and ATL – and independent studies all report that in excess of 50% of those who commence a career in teaching leave the profession within the first 5 years. The loss of experienced teachers in England has been accompanied by concerns about standards and outcomes for students.

It is imperative that teaching in Ireland remains a profession with high standards for recruitment, and a rate of remuneration to ensure the retention of experienced teachers.⁴

⁴ 6 Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland: Review conducted on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills July 2012

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/22/teachers-plan-leave-five-years-survey-workload-england>

Conclusion

All public servants have seen dramatic reductions in their pay since 2008. However, the teaching profession has suffered additional, particular and disproportionate cuts arising from commencement on the first point of a lengthened scale and the abolition of pensionable allowances associated with the qualifications required for appointment. Agreements made in the intervening period have failed to address the serious, disproportionate nature of these cuts on the salaries of teachers and lecturers.

The benefits of the public service pension have reduced, as has the employer contribution, while the contributions made by our members have increased. The length of the teachers' scale has compounded the effects of the pension changes. There is little doubt that these changes have impacted on recruitment and retention of teachers and lecturers, and that they have the potential to further undermine the status of teaching/lecturing as a profession. The failure to pay the outstanding award to principals and deputy principals in primary schools has been a source of grievance and discontent. The abolition of the PME/H. Dip. allowance for new entrant post-primary teachers similarly is a source of serious and growing discontent.

During the time that these cuts were being implemented, teachers and lecturers have continued to cooperate with the public service reform agenda and, in particular, to implement change across the education sector, to ensure that Ireland continues to provide a world class education system.

We call on the Commission, in reaching its conclusions, to:

- set out a clear timetable for the prompt and orderly unwinding of the FEMPI legislation, including steps to ensure pay parity between pre and post 2011 entrants;
- recommend the restoration of the payment of the PME/H. Dip. Allowance;
- recommend the payment of all outstanding third party awards including the outstanding Benchmarking award to primary principals and deputy principals;
- recommend that, with immediate effect, those in the Single Pension Scheme are no longer required to pay the pension levy (PRD); and
- recommend that the State authorities be required to carry out an actuarial review on independently agreed assumptions of the value of career average pensions for workers, such as teachers, with longer pay scales.