



Public funding to public higher education institutions (2008-2020)

Recurrent funding to Irish universities has been growing for four consecutive years with a significant re-investment in 2019 and in 2020. This year's funding includes once-off covid-support funding of about €155 million in recognition of the significant additional costs arising from the impact of the pandemic. Yet the increase in the level of funding for teaching was modest when continuing growth in students numbers and cost increases arising from national pay agreements are taken in to account. Restrictions remain in place in respect of core staffing numbers but some growth in core staffing numbers have been sanctioned in 2020, and now translates in a positive growth of academic staff over the period. Various developments related to governance and funding are ongoing, including a review of the economic impact of funding options for higher education (due to be concluded in 2021) and preparations for drafting the legislation governing the Higher Education Authority (the agency responsible for funding and regulation of higher education). The latter is expected to have an impact on university governance, while the process around the creation of Technological Universities, which involves the merger of Institutes of Technology, continues.



-9.5%

funding decrease in real terms



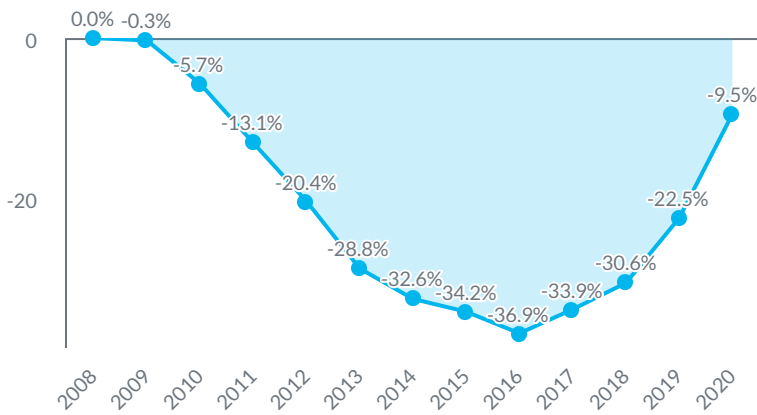
funding decrease despite economic growth



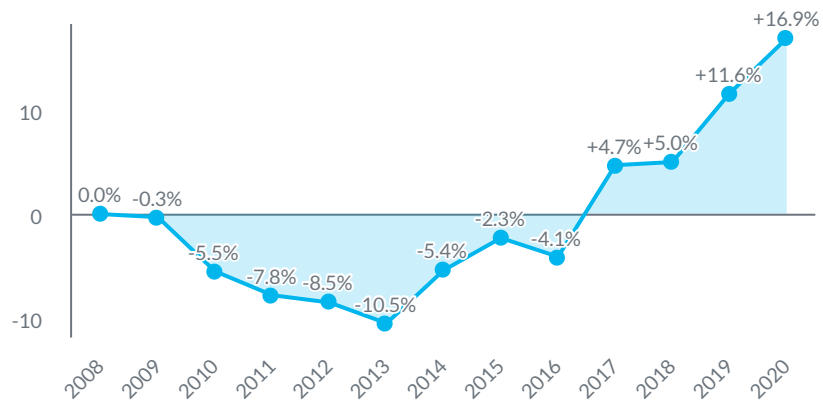
funding decrease despite student numbers growth

Funding volumes (real terms)

2008 basis



Annual change



University demographics (2009-2020)



+31.7% students



+3% academic staff



-10% non-academic staff

IRELAND

Item	Total public funding (EUR) ¹	Total public funding as percentage of GDP ²	Inflation rate ³	Student numbers ⁴	Staff numbers ⁵
Sources	Irish Universities' Association	Eurostat (for GDP at market prices)	Eurostat	Irish Universities' Association	Irish Universities' Association
2008	1,548,400,000	0.83% c	3.1%	154,819	19,333
2009	1,517,800,000	0.89%	-1.7%	161,539	20,035
2010	1,411,600,000	0.84%	-1.6%	172,217	19,176
2011	1,317,900,000	0.77%	1.2%	177,079	18,044
2012	1,228,600,000	0.70%	1.9%	179,487	17,699
2013	1,104,800,000	0.62% c	0.5%	182,089	17,337
2014	1,048,300,000	0.54%	0.3%	186,560	17,106
2015	1,024,300,000	0.39%	0%	191,304	17,069
2016	980,300,000	0.36%	-0.2%	197,979	17,162
2017	1,029,900,000	0.34% c	0.3%	199,427	17,475
2018	1,088,700,000	0.33% c	0.7%	203,693	17,920
2019	1,226,300,000	0.34%	0.9%	206,989 c	18,518
2020	1,426,100,000 f	N/A	-0.5%	212,801	19,341
2021	N/A	N/A	N/A	216,013 f	N/A

Last update: 24/03/2021

¹ Total public funding in EUR provided to HEIs by national public authorities; includes recurrent grant funding provided by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) plus capital funding provided by the HEA and research funding provided in respect of the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTL). Further research grant funding provided by other national research agencies are not included. 2020 funding also includes a once-off allocation of emergency covid support funding of c. €155m.

² Total public funding as defined above as percentage of GDP at market prices (revised as described in PFO report).

³ Harmonised Indices of Consumer Prices (HICPs) inflation rate as annual average rate of change. HICPs are designed for international comparisons of consumer price inflation.

⁴ Total number of students enrolled in public higher education institutions in Ireland, counted in full time equivalents (FTE). Student numbers are reported per academic year (**Caution! 2008 = academic year 2007/2008**).

⁵ Total number of academic and non-academic staff employed at public higher education institutions in Ireland (core funded staff only) (FTE). Doctoral candidates are excluded. Staff numbers reported are numbers employed at 1 January of each year.

N/A= not available

c = corrected

f = forecast/estimate

p = provisional

o = officially announced figure