

## **Union stance on Improved Standards for PhD Researchers**

TU Dublin Students' Union values the role that PhD researchers provide to academia, both in teaching undergraduate students and in furthering Ireland as a key player in research and development. PhD students spend countless hours researching their topic for the good of the wider academic community, in addition to taking tutorials, marking assignments, and invigilating exams. Their research is a full-time job, yet Ireland does not provide a reasonable salary for such high-profile work, nor is this research recognized as full time work.

TU Dublin Students' Union firmly believes that as PhD researchers are workers in their field, and they should be paid a salary that reflects the hours they spend working and researching. Budget 2024 consisted of a stipend increase from €19,000 to €22,000 per annum for Irish Research Council (IRC) and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) PhDs only.

Not only is this still far below both the national minimum and living wages, it is also a far cry from the €25,000 figure recommended by the Department of Further and Higher Education's own [recently published review of PhD supports in Ireland](#). These increases are not only far short of acceptable standards; they also apply to less than 30% of all PhD's.

PhD researchers funded directly by TU Dublin's Research Scholar Awards face stipends far lower at €19,000, with no additional funding provided by the government to increase it to the recommended rate, or any commitment from TU Dublin to do so unilaterally. This is further compounded by additional annual expenses faced by non-EEA researchers of up to €1000 euro for mandatory private health insurance and residency card renewal, a sum which is not covered by the PhDs funded by the university.

The Union intends to work with the PWO (where reasonably possible & not contradictory with current Union policy) to lobby for better stipend rates for all PhD students, both locally at TU Dublin and at the national level. Locally, the Union will campaign for all PhD stipends to be set at the [living wage or higher](#), regardless of the funding source. Additionally, the Union will lobby for improved rights for non-EEA researchers, including the immediate abolition of residency card renewal fees and a transition of visa status to the [Hosting Agreement Scheme](#). The union will work with the Postgraduate Officer on these issues.

**Proposed By:** Shauna O'Toole, VP for Academic Affairs

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