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Budget 2015

USI - Student Guide to the Budget

**Student Supports**

**Maintenance Grant**

The maintenance grant will remain at current levels.

There will now be four grant payments prior to December 2015 and five afterwards as opposed to three before and six after. This is due to the cost of college in the first semester.

**Mature Students and Student Parents**

The Back to Education Allowance will remain at current levels.

Child Benefit has been increased by €5 per child from January 2015.

**Student Contribution**

As announced in 2011, the staggered increase in the student contribution charge will see fees set at €3,000 for the next academic year. This is the final scheduled increase outlined by the government.

**HEI Funding**

The €25 million funding withheld in budgets 2013 and 2014 will be returned.

**Accommodation**

**Rent-A-Room Relief**

The threshold for exempt income under the rent-a-room relief scheme is being increased to €12,000. Up from €10,000 last year.

**Students in Work**

**USC**

USC- Those earning less than €12,012 will not be liable for USC, up from €10,036 last year.

Those earning between €12,013 and €17,576 will pay 1.5% on the USC down from 2% last year

Those earning in excess of €17,576 will pay 3.5% on the USC, down from 4% last year.

**Other Measures of Interest to Students**

**Teaching posts**

1,700 teaching posts have been announced. 920 mainstream teachers, 480 resource teachers and 365 special needs teachers.

**Other Taxes**

There has been no tax increases for motor tax, VRT, diesel or petrol.

**Water Charges**

Income tax relief will be available at the standard rate in respect of water charges up to a maximum of €500 per household per year. USI will now begin lobbying to ensure that students are exempt from 12 month billing periods.

**Tourism**

The 9% VAT rate for tourism related services will remain in place.

**Rural Development**

New minister and budget for rural economic development.

**Dept Arts Heritage & Gaeltacht**

€212 million additional funding has been allocated to this department.

**Dept of Foreign Affairs & Trade**

€12.5 million in increased funding for emigrants support programme.

The new Irish film tax credit scheme is due to commence in 2015.