

Social
Democrats

Holly CAIRNS TD

Representing West Cork



Holly Cairns TD calls for 'No Detriment' policy for UCC, CIT and other Third-level colleges - 7 Apr 2020

Cork South West TD Holly Cairns has called for the a 'No Detriment' policy for 3rd level students across Cork and countrywide. This approach would ensure that students' grade point average (GPA) will not fall as a result of lower exam or assignment grades due to mitigating factors such as limited/no access to broadband, unstable living environments or mental health difficulties during the COVID-19 emergency.

"This is about ensuring students are treated fairly," says Deputy Cairns. "Despite their best efforts we can't expect them to perform as well this year as they would under normal circumstances, when they have access to lectures, libraries and other resources – and that's before you take into account the additional anxiety created by the emergency. And as well all know, broadband is still a major issue for West Cork and rural Ireland generally. The 'No Detriment' policy called for by the Social Democrats today is about equity and fairness for our students," she said.

UCC Social Democrats Society Chair Martin Peter Rahill said that the student group *UCC Students Supporting No Detriment Policy* are calling for the "fairest solution for every student of UCC who may be otherwise affected."

According to Deputy Cairns, UCC, CIT, and other third-level education have already put in place considerable new systems and supports with teaching staff developing online learning and assessment tools in a very short period of time. "The 'No Detriment' policy would build on these efforts, guaranteeing that *all* students will be treated fairly, despite their personal circumstances," she said.

Last week, petitions were launched calling on all Irish third-level institutes to implement 'No Detriment.' The approach has been widely adopted in the UK and the Social Democrats are calling on Minister of State for Higher Education Mary Mitchell O'Connor to work with the heads of institutions here to ensure this approach is put in place countrywide.

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