



GRIFFITH COLLEGE

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VIA EMAIL & POST

Mr. J. McDermott,
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GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON NATIONAL TRAINING FUND LEVY SUBMISSION FROM GRIFFITH COLLEGE TO DEPT. OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

For employers to benefit directly from the outcomes of higher education the education and skills provided need to be relevant to employers' needs. It is important that any proposed new training levy be linked to skills needs.

Employers are being asked to contribute to the costs of higher and further education and training on the basis that they benefit directly from this expenditure. On this basis, it appears reasonable for employers to insist that the National Training Fund levy contributions should not be raised through the PRSI system without direct access by employers to the resulting fund. This must be linked to identifiable skills needs and deeper employer-education engagement. Specific linking arrangements would include Springboard, Apprenticeships or the very successful French "alternance" system, of which the following are key attributes;

French Alternance System

- 1) Employers fund attendance through employer PRSI type contribution.
- 2) Employers make arrangements with universities, colleges and training institutions to provide courses, delivering skills relevant to employer needs.
- 3) Students alternate between attendance at work and attendance at college on a daily or weekly basis, hence its name "alternance".
- 4) Employers draw on the Fund to pay the course fees, typically €5,000 per annum.
- 5) Individual employers or employer associations agree the course content with colleges. This ensures the relevance of course content to employer need.

The existing or emerging skill gaps require a more coherent response from the higher and further education funding policy. For example, the continuing ICT and pharmaceutical skills gaps need to be addressed by funding for courses of longer duration than 2 years. Learners could study for say 2 years full time and 2 years part time, funded by this proposed levy. This would ensure availability of skilled personnel at an early stage when students move to part time study. It would be necessary to ensure that students were work ready after 2 years.

Diarmuid A. Hegarty
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