

Matt Murtagh

No PhD stipend below living wage • Paid parental leave for PhDs • Freeze fees for all PGs

Postgraduates in Trinity face a number of challenges in 2023. PhD researchers continue to be exploited by the university with widening inequalities in pay and conditions. It is entirely unacceptable for a PhD to earn less than a minimum wage while colleagues in their lab or office might be in receipt of up to €50,000 for the same work. It is unacceptable that in 2023 PhD researchers in Trinity are still denied basic rights such as maternity, paternity or sick leave. It is unacceptable that PhDs in Trinity are still being asked to work for free despite advice from the Department of Higher and Further Education that this practice must cease. Masters students face different but equally as difficult challenges; the university has become reliant on charging these students astronomical course fees and inflating course numbers at the expense of quality education, an unsustainable practice that will have ramifications for both the students of these courses and the future of the university.

In order to fight for postgraduates on these issues, I am asking you to support my nomination to university board. I have a wealth of experience that will best enable me to fulfil this role. First and foremost, I held this position for the 2022/2023 academic year, representing postgraduates through a tumultuous period where we fought for increases in PhD stipends to be applied to all PhDs at the university, firmly objected to the lack of paid parental leave for PhDs in the thoroughly lacklustre review of Trinity's student parent policy and successfully lobbied to keep increases in postgraduate courses far below the rate of inflation. As an active member of the Postgraduate Workers Organisation (PWO) I have represented PhDs during the government review of PhD supports, successfully lobbied the Science Foundation of Ireland to pay for their non-EU PhD's visa costs and led the organisation of the [two largest PhD protests in the history of the state outside Leinster House](#).

In 2023 and 2024, I will continue to campaign for these issues and more – I will campaign for an assurance from the university that no PhD is paid anything below the [living wage](#). I will campaign for the full implementation of the [government's review of PhD supports](#) while criticising its shortcomings. I will campaign for long-overdue visa reform for non-EU masters students and PhD students, with a push for all PhDs to have reckonable residency for their years spent contributing to the Irish research community.