

YOUNG FINE GAEL

Our Say  
*Higher*  
Education

2026

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# Securing Student Futures

1

## Abolish the Student Contribution Fee

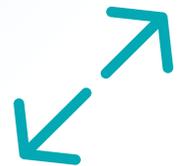
Introduce a phased programme to eliminate student fees by progressively reducing them across consecutive budgets. Fees should be continuously reduced over the next 4 budgets to eliminate fees and ensure that we continue to promote and invest in education for young people.



2

## Expand SUSI Thresholds

Expand SUSI eligibility thresholds to include middle-income families in the €55,000 - €75,000 bracket. This measure will provide targeted support to students who currently fall outside existing fee coverage criteria but continue to face significant financial pressure.



3

## SUSI for Part-Time Postgraduate Students

Extend SUSI to support part-time postgraduate students, recognising the realities of those balancing study with work, caring duties or financial constraints.



4

## Increase Support for Women in STEM

Increase targeted funding for initiatives that boost women's participation and success in STEM - including scholarships, early-stage outreach and professional mentorship programmes.



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5

## End Overseas Fee Penalties for Irish-Born Students

Remove higher education residency rules to exempt Irish-citizen students from international tuition fees upon returning from temporary stays outside the EU. YFG calls for an exemption for students who completed part of their education in Ireland and hold Irish citizenship or were born on the island.



6

## Increase Support for Independent Student Applications

Disregard the distance from the institution for independent applications to SUSI. Currently, independent students who are not supported by their families are faced with the same income and distance thresholds for their application as those who are supported by their families in their educational journey.



7

## Increase PhD Stipends

Increase PhD stipends to publicly funded researchers through the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland. This will reflect the real cost of living and ensure that research remains a viable pathway for young people.

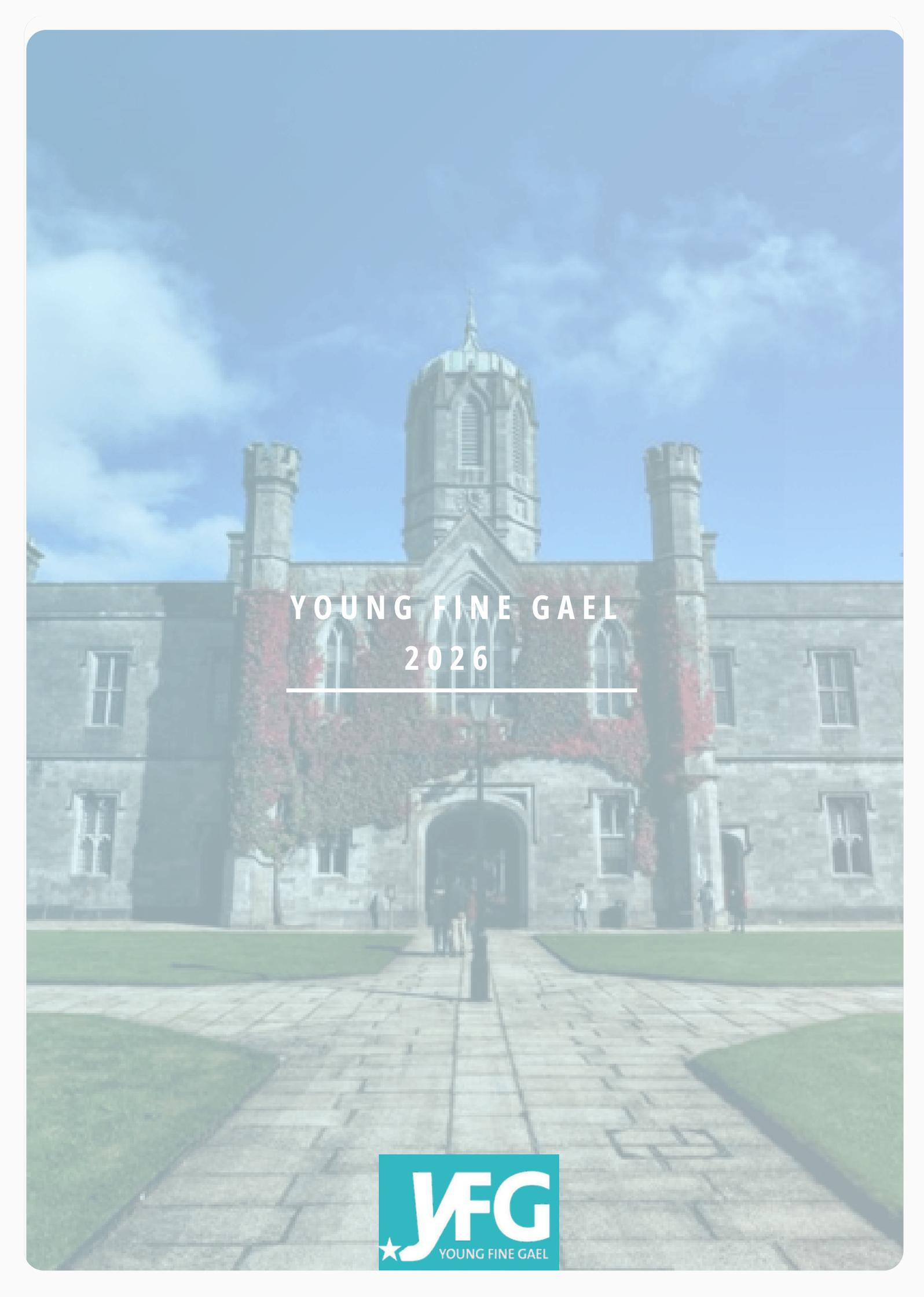


8

## Increase Base Apprenticeship Rates to the National Minimum Wage

Guarantee minimum wage for all apprentices throughout their training. This measure recognises that apprentices are both learning and working, and ensures that work pays equally for all.





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