P-TECH IRELAND STUDENT SURVEY 2024

REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Foras Taighde ar Oideachas
Educational Research Centre

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P-TECH Ireland

About P-TECH (Pathways in Technology)[1]

- The first P-TECH school opened in Brooklyn, New York in September 2011, as a result of the collaboration of IBM, the New York City Department of Education, The City University of New York and the New York City College of Technology ("City Tech").
- Ireland was the first country in Europe to introduce the P-TECH programme. It was adapted from the P-TECH model in the US to the Irish context. P-TECH is a three-way partnership between schools, third-level institutions and industry partners.

P-TECH goals

- To provide young people with an innovative and highly relevant educational opportunity that enables them to earn a third-level qualification, along with the skills required to enter the workforce or continue their education.
- To address the "skills gap" and strengthen the economy by building a workforce with technical and professional skills required for 21st century jobs.

P-TECH in Ireland

- In July 2016, the Government launched a major initiative for Dublin's North East Inner City (NEIC) to oversee the long term, social and economic regeneration of the area.
- To support the work, the Mulvey Report, entitled "Dublin's North East Inner City – Creating a Brighter Future", was published in February 2017 (Mulvey, 2017). It made a number of recommendations outlining actions to tackle priority areas, including education. As one of the actions in the area of education, P-TECH was launched as a pilot programme in November 2018. The programme involved three post-primary schools and was launched by the Taoiseach, Minister for Education and Minister for Finance.
- The programme has since expanded in both the number of schools and industry partners that participate. It is now in operation across five NEIC schools - St. Joseph's Secondary School, Marino College, Larkin Community College, Rosmini Community School and O'Connell Secondary School - and has multiple industry partners supporting the programme, including IBM Ireland Limited, Cisco Systems, Uisce Éireann (formerly Irish Water), Virgin Media, Irish Life, Iarnród Éireann, Salesforce and SAS. Since June 2023, Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) acts as the industry strategic partner for P-TECH. The National College of Ireland and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board are the P-TECH Ireland third-level partners.
- The programme starts in Junior Cycle, when students experience a range of activities and study opportunities which aim to develop skills in technology, business, creativity and personal development. In 2021, students in the first three pilot schools were surveyed by the Educational Research Centre (ERC) on behalf of the Department of Education (DoE). Survey questions examined students' P-TECH experiences during the Junior Cycle and findings were shared with the DoE and P-TECH stakeholders.
- P-TECH learning takes place mainly over a three-year Senior Cycle (including Transition Year). A large part of the curriculum is covered in Transition Year through classroom work, special learning events and a work placement. Assessments are continuous and this means that there are no P-TECH exams. Additional study takes

[1] Source: P-TECH Ireland Student Overview 2018. Final_Ireland_Launch_11.15.pdf (Provided by DoE to the ERC)

place during the final two years of post-primary school through timetabled P-TECH lessons.
- At Senior Cycle, students have the opportunity to work towards a Level 6 Special Purpose Award which has been validated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland and accredited by the National College of Ireland. This provides an opportunity for students to further develop their skills by covering two modules: "Skills for Business and Career" and "Skills for a Digital World". The P-TECH Senior Cycle programme is structured around an Abilities Framework which sets out learning goals and activities for students, enabling them to develop skills, achieve success and enjoy their learning and assessments.
- Students who first entered P-TECH Ireland completed their final year of the Senior Cycle and their post-primary school experience of P-TECH in 2023-2024.
- This report provides a snapshot of the student experience of the first P-TECH student cohort in Ireland as they finish post-primary school. It looks at their views on school, their experiences in P-TECH and their plans for the future.

Snapshot of students' experiences in P-TECH

- The ERC was asked by the DoE to look at aspects of the student experience of the implementation of P-TECH in Ireland. Complementary work was undertaken in parallel by the Inspectorate of the DoE.
- In March 2024, the ERC gathered data on the experiences of Sixth Year P-TECH students in Ireland, examining their views on school, experiences in P-TECH, and their plans for the future.
- Students in St Joseph's Secondary School, Marino College and Larkin Community School were surveyed. The survey focused on students in these three schools as Second and Third year students in these schools had participated in an earlier P-TECH survey in May 2021.[2]
- This report draws on survey data gathered by the ERC.

Method

Design

An online survey was chosen as it is easy and efficient to administer. The survey mainly gathered quantitative data with a small amount of qualitative data collected through some open-ended (text response) questions.

How was the survey developed?

The ERC drafted questions on student background, experiences of learning in school, students' views on their P-TECH experience, and students' educational and career aspirations. Some survey questions were drawn from other studies or projects including the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS),[3] the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)[4] and the Trinity Access Programme (TAP).[5] The P-TECH Ireland Steering Committee reviewed draft questions and proposed revisions which were incorporated prior to finalisation of the survey content.

[2] Newer additions to P-TECH Ireland – Rosmini College and O'Connell Secondary school – have not been involved in either survey.
[3] The IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is a series of international assessments of the mathematics and science knowledge of students around the world, see https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/
[4] The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges, see https://www.oecd.org/pisa/
[5] Trinity Access carries out evaluation and assessment of its programmes, see https://www.tcd.ie/trinityaccess/research/

Consent

Each school was asked to share information about the survey with the parents/guardians of students in P-TECH and advised to obtain parental consent using the school's preferred approach (e.g., online forms, apps or phone calls). Schools were advised that surveys should be administered only to students whose parents/guardians had provided consent. Students also provided their own assent to take part. For all questions, students were free to continue with the survey without answering a question if they wished.

Data collection

Following a Data Privacy Impact Assessment, in accordance with GDPR and the ERC's Data Protection policies, data were collected using an online survey tool, Qualtrics.™

Schools were provided with a link to the online survey to share with Sixth Year students in P-TECH. They were advised that where possible, it was preferable to administer the survey in a class/group setting. Students who missed the group administration had the opportunity to complete it at another convenient time.

The data collection took place between 01/03/2024 and 22/03/2024.

Preparation and analysis of data

- The data were exported from Qualtrics[6] into IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29).
- The results are descriptive only.
- Percentages may not sum to precisely 100 % due to rounding.
- Net Promoter ratings were used to gauge students' experience in P-TECH.[7] Respondents gave ratings of how likely they were to recommend elements of P-TECH to other students (0 [Not at all likely] to 10 [Extremely likely]). Depending on their ratings, students were assigned to one of three categories:
  - *Promoters* responded with a score of 9 or 10. They were positive about their experience and are very likely to recommend the programme.
  - *Passives* responded with a score of 7 or 8. They were satisfied but not sufficiently so to be considered promoters.
  - *Detractors* responded with a score of 0 to 6. They are not satisfied with their experience and may even discourage others from the programme.
- Open-ended question responses were coded separately in Excel.
- Qualitative analysis was conducted on students' responses to the open-ended questions. Responses were categorised into themes. A response could be assigned to more than one theme. Some quotes from students' responses are also presented in the report to provide further insights into their opinions.

Response rates

According to the DoE, 77 Sixth year students in Ireland were participating in the P-TECH programme in the school year 2023/2024 in the three schools participating in the survey.[8] Of these, a total of 49 students responded to the survey. This represents a response rate of

[6] Copyright © 2024 Qualtrics https://www.qualtrics.com
[7] The assignment of students to categories of Promoters, Passives and Detractors follows the procedure utilised by Qualtrics https://www.qualtrics.com/en-gb/experience-management/customer/nps-question/.
[8] Student numbers were confirmed by one participating school; other numbers are estimates based on information provided by the DoE.

nearly 64 %.[9] There was some variation in response rates across schools, ranging from 50 % to 83.3 %.

Of the 49 students who responded:

- A total of 43 students (87.8 %) finished the survey (reached the end of the survey online).
- Just 6 students (12.2 %) left the survey before reaching the end point (they either manually closed the survey or the session expired).

Who took part?

Gender of P-TECH students who completed the survey:

- 57.1 % identified as male;
- 38.8 % identified as female;
- 4.1 % identified as non-binary, a-gender or gender fluid.

Language spoken at home:

- The majority of students reported that they spoke English most often at home (63.3 %).
- No student reported Irish (Gaeilge) as the language most often spoken at home.
- Over one-third of students reported that they spoke another language most often at home (36.7 %).

Leaving Certificate Programme:

- The majority of students were enrolled on the Established Leaving Certificate programme (93.9 %).
- A small number were enrolled on the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme (6.1 %).

How do P-TECH students feel about school?

Students provided information on their punctuality, truancy and school absence; ratings of active engagement in school; attitudes to teachers and their future aspirations and goals.

Lateness, truancy, and authorised absence

Students were asked to report the number of times they were late for school; the number of times they had skipped some classes; the number of times they skipped a whole day of school and the number of times they were absent from school for a valid reason (authorised absence) during the school year (2023-2024).[10] Skipping classes/school is classed as student truancy in this report. Figure 1 shows the frequency of these activities in three categories (never; 1 to 20 times; more than 20 times).[11]

In the current school year:

- Arriving late to school was frequently reported as almost two-thirds of students reported that they arrived late between 1 and 20 times.
- Over one-quarter of students reported arriving late to school more than 20 times.

[9] Non-completion may have been due to student/parent refusal or student absence from school during the survey period.
[10] It is recognised that students may under- or over-report the frequencies of these activities and students' recollections over the school year may not be accurate.
[11] The rationale for grouping 1 to 20 days is that 20 days represents the point at which schools are required to submit Student Absence Returns to TUSLA.

- It was less common for students to report skipping classes or whole days from school:
  - 14.3 % of students reported skipping classes more than 20 times.
  - 14.3 % of students reported skipping a whole day of school more than 20 times.
- 10.2 % of students reported authorised absence from school more than 20 times.

Figure 1: Percentages of students who reported lateness, skipped classes, whole school days, or had authorised absenteeism in the current school year (2023-2024)

Views on school

Global rating of school

Students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement '*I look forward to school most days*'.

- 30.6 % of students disagreed/strongly disagreed that they looked forward to school.
- 32.7 % of students neither agreed or disagreed with this statement.
- 36.7 % of students agreed/strongly agreed that they looked forward to school.

Active engagement in school

Students were asked to rate their levels of agreement with various statements related to their active engagement in school. Levels of agreement with each of the individual statements are shown in Figure 2.

Focusing on the percentages of students demonstrating positive attitudes towards school and learning, findings show that:

- Over half of students agreed/strongly agreed that they enjoyed being in school.
- Nearly two-fifths of students agreed/strongly agreed that they liked challenging assignments.
- One-third of students disagreed/strongly disagreed that school is boring; i.e., for about one-third of participants, school is reported *not* to be boring (although two-fifths of students agree/strongly agreed that school is boring).
- Over nine-tenths of students agreed/strongly agreed that they enjoyed learning new things.
- Over two-thirds of students agreed/strongly agreed that they learn new things that are interesting to them at school
- Over four-fifths of students agreed/strongly agreed that learning can be fun.

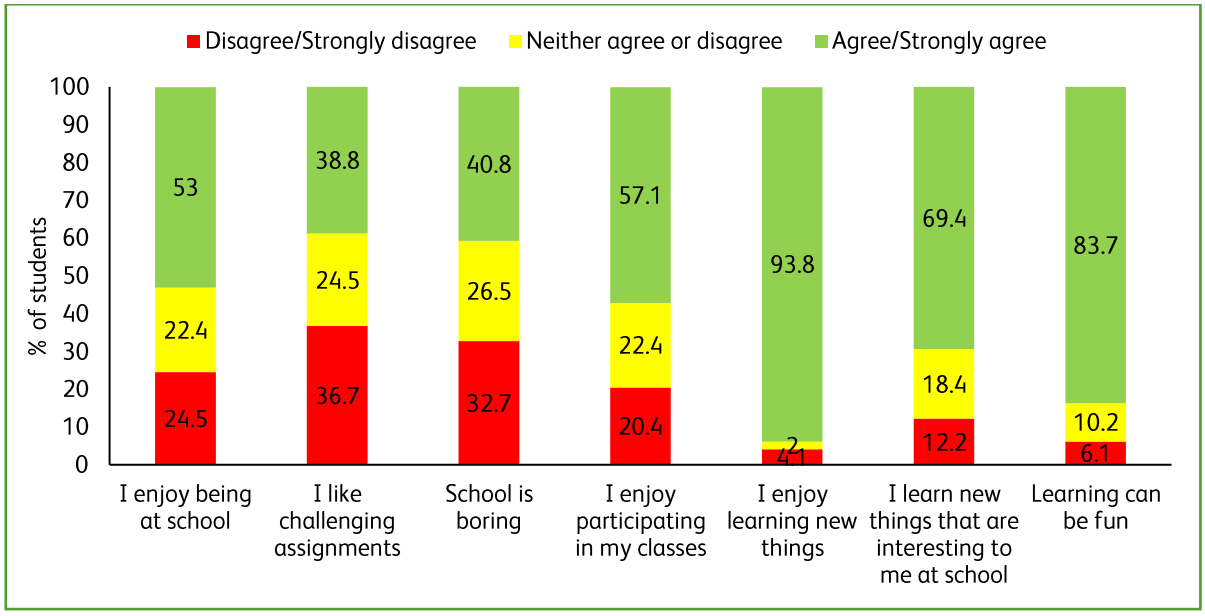

Figure 2: Active engagement in school

Responses to the statements were also combined to give an overall measure, which is intended to describe the extent to which students are deeply involved in the learning process as characterised by an enthusiasm and desire to learn new things (Bundick, 2010). Active engagement scores ranged from 1-5 with higher scores representing higher levels of engagement and lower scores representing lower engagement. On average, students were positively engaged with a mean score of 3.6 (Min=1; Max=5).

Attitudes to teachers

Students held generally positive views of their teachers (see Figure 3).

- Three-quarters of students agreed/strongly agreed that most of their teachers were friendly.
- Over two-thirds of students agreed/strongly agreed that they could talk to their teachers if they had a problem.

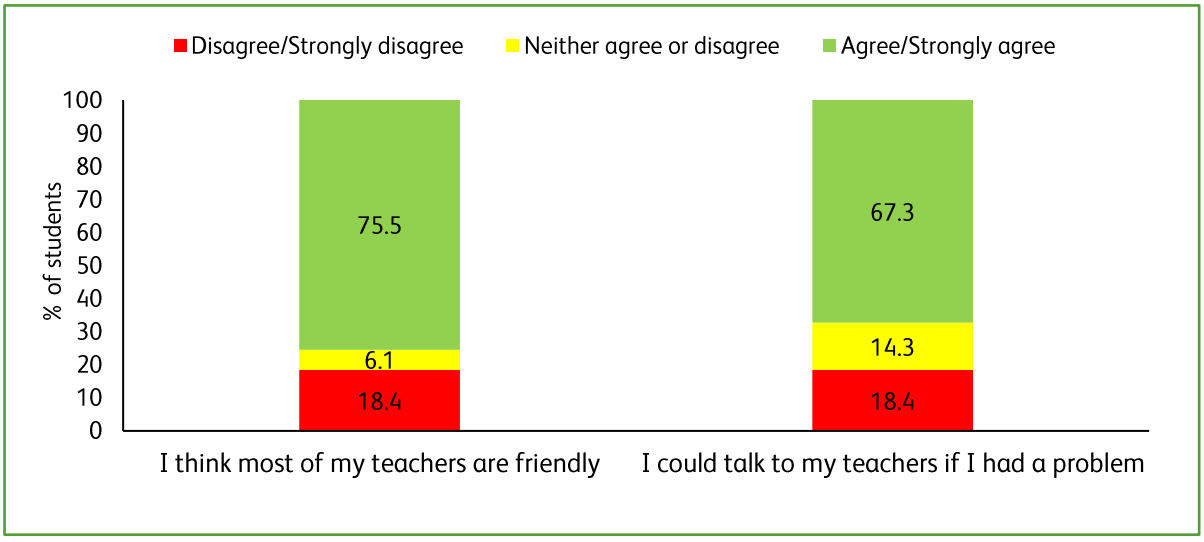

Figure 3: Students' attitudes to teachers

Educational aspirations and goals

Students were asked to rate how much they agreed/disagreed with five statements related to their educational aspirations and goals (Appleton et al., 2006). Levels of agreement with each of the individual statements are shown in Figure 4.

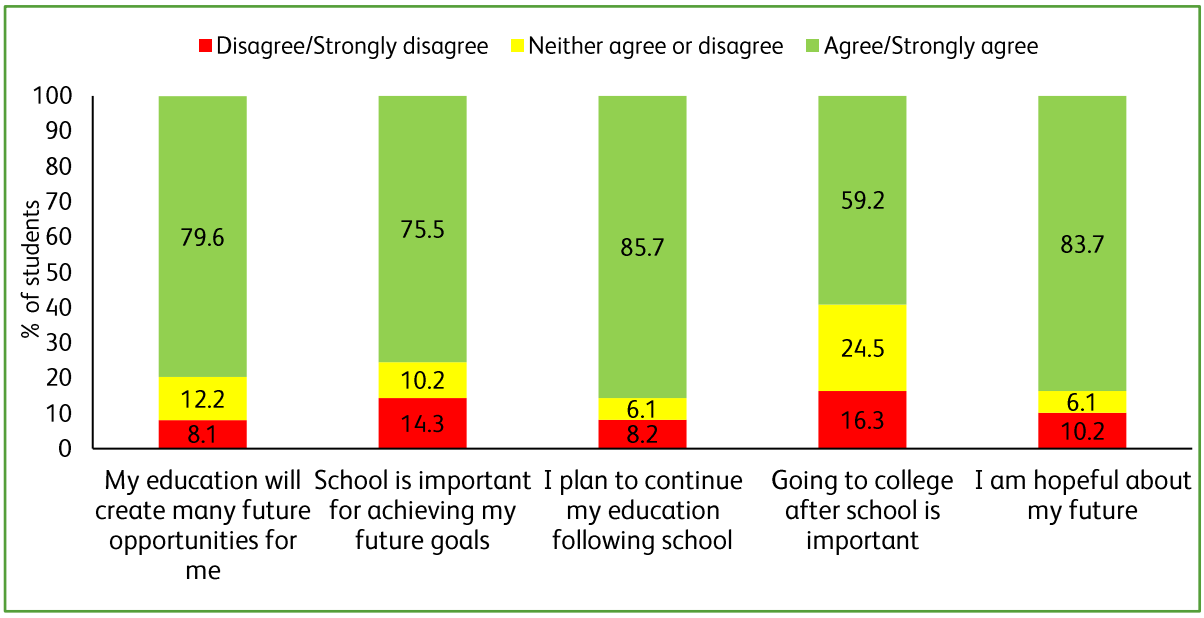

Figure 4: Students' educational aspirations and goals

- Nearly four-fifths of students agreed/strongly agreed that their education will create many future opportunities.
- Similarly, about three-quarters of students agreed/strongly agreed that school is important for achieving their future goals.
- The majority of students (85.7 %) agreed/strongly agreed that they plan to continue their education following school.
- Almost three-fifths of students agreed/strongly agreed that going to college after school is important.
- The majority of students agreed/strongly agreed that they were hopeful about their future.

Responses to these statements were combined into an overall measure and scores ranged from 1-5 with higher scores representing higher educational aspirations and lower scores representing lower educational aspirations. Students had a mean score of 3.9 (Min=1; Max=5).

Students' views on P-TECH

Students reflected on their experiences of the delivery of P-TECH; views on learning outcomes; their attainment of P-TECH badges; experiences of mentoring and the work experience placement.

P-TECH Implementation and delivery

Students were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction (dissatisfied, unsure, satisfied) with elements of the implementation and delivery of P-TECH. Items were grouped into three themes and ordered by the highest level of satisfaction (see Table 1).

Table 1: Students' satisfaction with elements of P-TECH implementation and delivery

	Dissatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied
Instruction and learning approaches			
Group projects/team activities	14.3	6.1	79.6
Collaboration and interaction among students	14.3	14.3	71.4
Peer learning	20.4	22.4	57.1
Feedback from teachers	14.3	30.6	55.1
Grading/assessment guidance and procedures	20.4	30.6	49.0
Educational taster sessions	18.4	30.6	49.0
Online and blended teaching methods	26.5	28.6	44.9
Classroom sessions with P-TECH teacher	24.5	32.7	42.9
E-Portfolio development	26.5	30.6	42.9
Digital (SkillsBuild) badges	34.7	26.5	38.8
Content covered in P-TECH (e.g., courses, modules)	24.5	36.7	36.7
Industry activities			
Work placement opportunities	10.2	12.2	77.6
Support provided by the P-TECH industry partners	24.5	18.4	57.1
Feedback from workplace mentors	24.5	22.4	53.1
Organisation and resources			
The P-TECH virtual learning environment (VLE)	20.4	24.5	55.1
Availability of resources (e.g., software, materials)	22.4	28.6	49.0
Overall organisation and administration	28.6	34.7	36.7

In terms of the *instruction and learning approaches* employed in P-TECH:

- Over three-quarters of students were satisfied with group projects.
- Students were satisfied with the level of collaboration and interaction among students (71 %).
- Over half of students were satisfied with their peer learning experiences; a similar percentage reported that they were satisfied with feedback from their teachers.
- Just under half of students were satisfied with the grading and assessment guidance and procedures or the educational taster sessions (e.g., on topics from higher education or industry).
- About two-fifths of students were satisfied with online teaching methods or the classroom sessions given by the P-TECH teacher.

- About two-fifths of student were satisfied with the E-Portfolio development process where students can host and reflect on all their work on P-TECH online.
- Just over one-third of students were satisfied with the Digital (SkillsBuild) badges where students can earn a range of industry recognised credentials to be added to their curriculum vitae.
- Just over one-third of students were satisfied with the content covered in P-TECH including the modules and courses.

In terms of *industry activities* in P-TECH:

- Over three-quarters of students were satisfied with the work placement opportunities and the experience of working within industry partner organisations.
- Over half of students were satisfied with the support provided by P-TECH industry partners.
- Over half of students were satisfied with the feedback they received from workplace mentors.

In terms of the *organisation and resources* in P-TECH:

- Over half of students were satisfied with the P-TECH virtual learning environment (VLE) as an interactive online space conducive to teaching and learning.
- Just under half of students were satisfied with the availability of resources in P-TECH (e.g., software, materials).
- Over one-third of students were satisfied with the overall organisation and administration.

P-TECH Learning outcomes

The P-TECH ability framework outlines the key skills and learning for students on the programme.[12] There are four values which underpin this framework for students, and it also sets out 16 skill areas or abilities that students are expected to develop over the programme. They are defined as follows:

- *Valuing Myself*: is about about enabling students to see their strengths and abilities, empowering them to experience a sense of achievement and success; building student confidence, self-belief and orienting them to understand their motivation and goals.
- *Valuing Others*: is being able to work well with others to achieve a common purpose; the development of skills such as teamwork & collaboration and communication.
- *Valuing Challenge*: is about valuing the opportunity to learn in all situations and particularly in challenges; to show creativity, problem-solving and tenacity as they work on a project.
- *Valuing our World*: students learn about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how they relate to them and their lives. Students are encouraged to think about different contexts and different environments.

Students were asked to reflect on the extent to which (not at all; to some/large extent) P-TECH supported their development in the skill areas or abilities (see Table 2).

- Across all four of the P-TECH values, most students (>80%) reported that P-TECH supported their development in various skill areas or abilities to some/large extent.

[12] Sources: Presentation 'Introducing the P-TECH Curriculum Ideas and Developments' (2021) and the P-TECH 2023-2024: Manual.

- There were six skills areas for which more than one-fifth of students reported that P-TECH had not supported their development: improving overall resilience; developing ability to stay motivated in pursuing goals and aspirations; identifying learning opportunities in challenges; helping students to decide what to do after school; increasing self-belief and self-confidence and developing problem-solving skills.

Table 2: Students' views on the extent to which P-TECH supported their development in the abilities framework

P-TECH values and skill areas or abilities		Not at all	To some/large extent
Valuing Myself (making the most of my potential)			
Personal development	In helping your personal growth and development	19.6	80.4
	In improving your overall resilience	23.9	76.1
	In developing your ability to stay motivated in pursuing your goals and aspirations	21.7	78.2
	In fostering a growth mindset	19.6	80.5
Learning	In identifying learning opportunities in challenges	21.7	78.3
	In reflecting on learning from experiences in different contexts	13.0	86.9
Career pathways	In developing your awareness of workplace skills	15.2	84.8
	In preparing you for the world of work	15.2	84.8
	In helping you to decide what to do after you leave school	28.3	71.7
Belonging	In helping you adapt to new challenges	15.2	84.8
	In increasing your self-belief and self-confidence	28.3	71.8
Valuing Others (learning to work together)			
Teamwork and Collaboration	In being able to work effectively as part of a team	15.6	84.5
	In being able to talk and communicate well with others	13.0	87.0
Communication	In giving you presentation skills	15.2	84.8
	In developing your ability to communicate in a digital environment	17.4	82.6
	In giving you writing skills for different media	17.4	82.6
Valuing Challenge (solving problems and finding new ways)			
Problem-solving and questioning	In developing your problem-solving skills	21.7	78.3
Project working	In working with structure and to timelines	19.6	80.4
Creativity	In helping you to think creatively	15.2	84.7
Goals and actions	In working to achieve goals I understand	17.4	82.6
Valuing our World (engaging in transformation)			
Global perspective	In thinking about ways you may have an impact in a global context	28.3	71.7
Community perspective	In thinking about ways you may have an impact in a local context	19.6	80.5
World of work	In learning about the world of work (Structures, Culture and Expectations)	13.0	87.0
	In developing digital and media literacy skills	15.2	84.8
Digital world	In developing your technical know-how	15.2	84.8

P-TECH Badges

Students recorded the numbers of P-TECH badges (credentials) they had earned at Senior Cycle (see Table 3). These badges are part of the wider programme of learning and document the skills developed in a number of areas including technical knowledge, skills in business, personal development and careers. Some badges are considered core to the P-TECH programme with opportunities to complete these badges built into allocated class time. Students can also engage in other courses through the IBM's SkillsBuild for Learners digital platform in their own time.[13]

Table 3: Number of P-TECH badges earned across the Senior Cycle

	No. of responses	Mean number of badges
Transition Year	44	7.1
Fifth Year	37	4.6
Sixth Year	24	4.0
Total number of badges	22	19.1 (SD 16.5)

- The average number of badges earned by students was highest at Transition Year and decreased across the other two years of the Senior Cycle.
- In total, the average number of badges earned across the Senior Cycle was 19 although the standard deviation was large (16.5).

Mentors

Students are supported by industry partner mentors throughout P-TECH. At Senior Cycle from Fifth Year, students can choose not to have a mentor. Figure 5 shows that the majority of students reported having a mentor in Transition Year with lower percentages of students reporting that they had a mentor in the subsequent years.

In terms of the consistency of mentoring, 6.1 % of students reported not having a mentor in any of the three Senior Cycle years; 30.6 % had a mentor for one year only; 25.5 % had a mentor for two years and 36.7 % had a mentor across all three years.

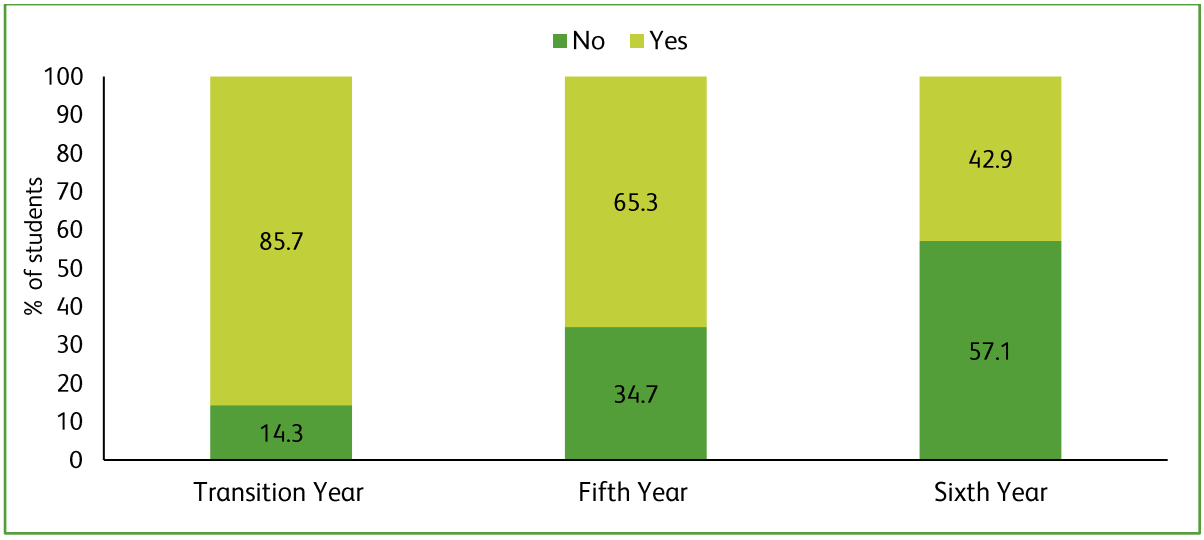

Figure 5: Percentages of students with a P-TECH mentor in each Senior Cycle year

[13] https://skillsbuild.org

Students were asked if they did *not* have a mentor at Fifth Year or Sixth Year to provide the reasons why they did not have one and 16 students responded.
Of these:

- 62.5 % said mentoring was not offered/available to them (e.g., "I didn't have the choice to have a mentor").
- 25.0 % said they had no time for mentoring (e.g., "I wanted to focus more on the Leaving Certificate").
- 12.5 % provided other reasons for not having a mentor (e.g., "I chose not to have one").

Mentor communication, availability and relationship

Students reported how frequently they communicated with their P-TECH mentor at Senior Cycle (see Figure 6).

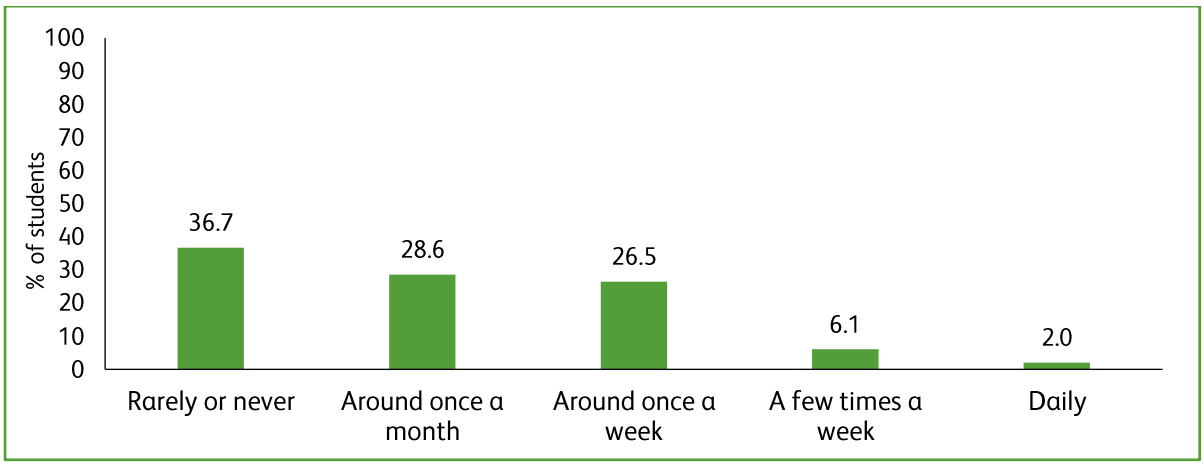

Figure 6: Communication with mentors

- Over one-third of students reported rarely or never having contact with mentors.
- About one-quarter indicated monthly contact while a further quarter of students reported weekly contact. It was less frequent for students to report having contact a few times a week' or daily.

There was some variation in students' satisfaction with the availability of the P-TECH mentor for guidance and support when needed (38.7 % satisfied/very satisfied; 28.5 % dissatisfied/very dissatisfied; see Figure 7).

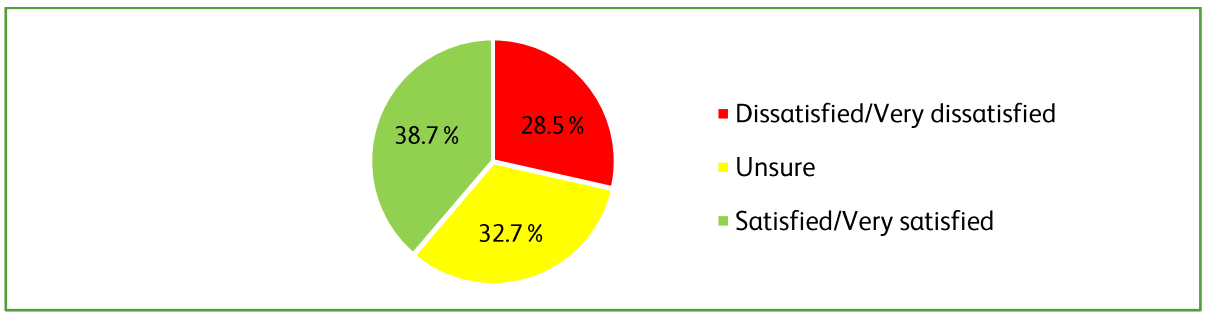

Figure 7: Students' satisfaction with the availability of mentors

Students described the relationship with P-TECH mentor as generally positive (28.6 % good; 34.7 % very good/excellent). However, about one-third of students rated the relationship with their P-TECH mentor as poor or fair (see Figure 8).

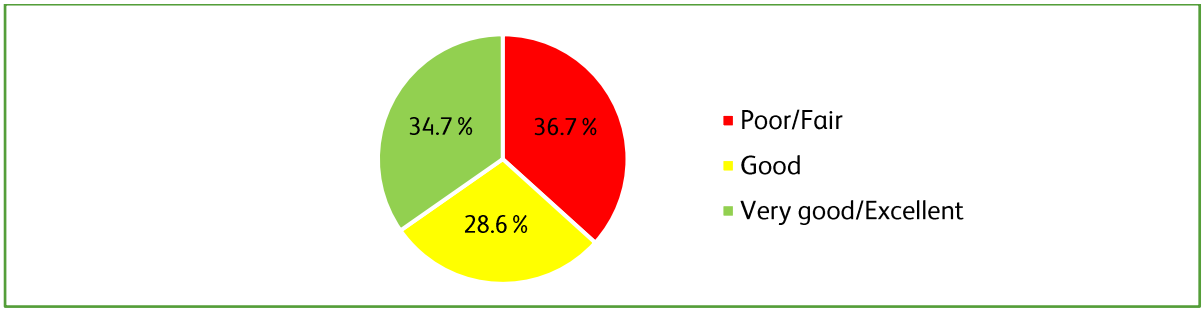

Figure 8: Students' satisfaction with the mentor relationship

Value of mentoring

Students were asked to report the extent (not at all; to some extent; to a large extent) to which they found P-TECH mentoring valuable for a variety of purposes (see Figure 9).

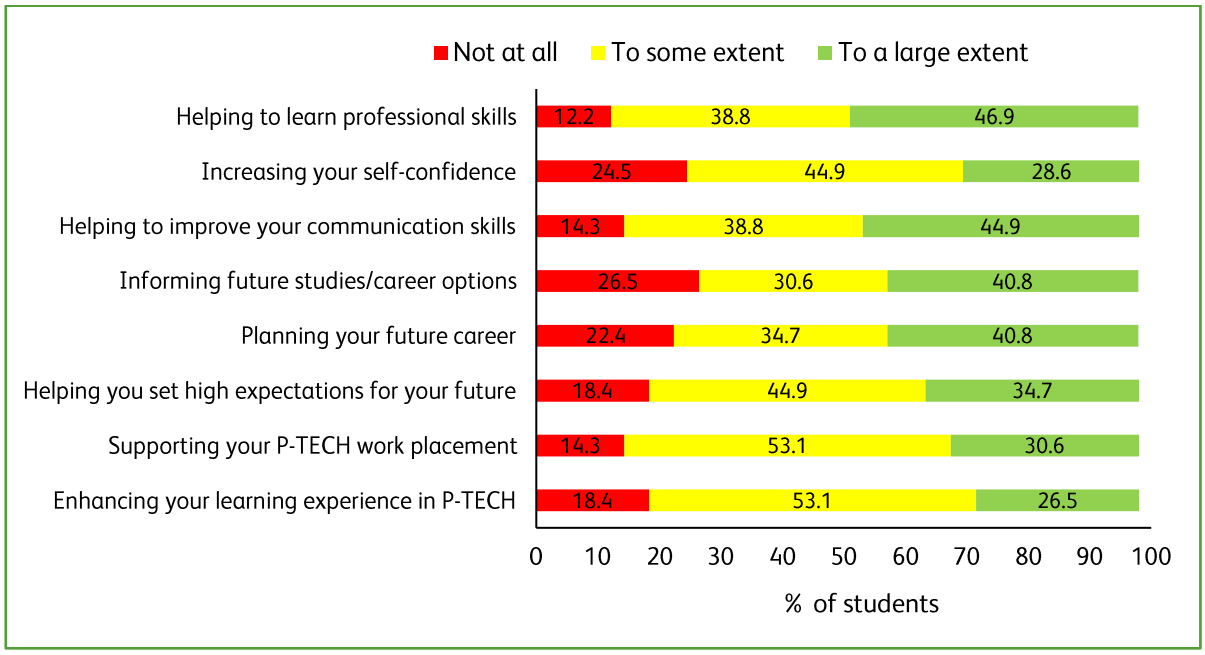

Figure 9: Perceived value of mentoring

Across several areas, the majority of students reported that they valued mentoring to some extent or a large extent.

Skills development:

- Over 80 % of students reported that mentoring was helping them (to some extent or to a large extent) to learn professional skills (e.g., teamwork, time management). The percentage was similar for improving communication skills (e.g., report writing, presentation skills).
- About one-quarter of students indicated that mentoring did not impact on their self-confidence.

Career and future planning:

- Over 80 % of students indicated mentoring was valuable for planning future careers, informing student choice of future studies/career options after finishing school or helping students set high expectations for their future.

P-TECH learning and activities:

- Over 80 % of students felt mentoring was enhancing their learning experience in P-TECH. A similarly high percentage indicated that mentoring supported the P-TECH work placement to some extent or to a large extent.

Mentoring ratings

Students rated how likely they were to recommend P-TECH mentoring to another student (Not at all likely [0] to Extremely likely [10]). Of the 48 respondents with data available for this item, the number of students considered to be detractors, passives and promoters of P-TECH mentoring are shown in Table 4.

- The majority of students were detractors and unlikely to recommend mentoring to others.
- A further quarter of students were passives or neutral.
- Just under one-fifth of students were likely to promote mentoring.

Table 4: Students' net promoter ratings for mentoring

0 Not at all likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely likely
8 (16%)	-	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	7 (14%)	7 (14%)	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	-	9 (18%)
Detractors (Ratings 0-6) (n=28; 58.3%)							**Passives (Ratings 7-8) (n=11; 22.9%)**		**Promoters (Ratings 9-10) (n=9; 18.8%)**	

P-TECH Work experience placement

The majority of students (81.6%) indicated that they had had a P-TECH work experience placement in Transition Year (2021-2022 school year). The work experience placements took place across a number of modes:[14]

- 62.5% onsite at the industry partners' office;
- 32.5% off-site;
- 27.5% online;
- 5.0% other (not specified).

Work experience placement projects

For students who had had a work experience placement they were asked to provide information on the type of project undertaken on placement. Students could select more than one type (see Table 5).

- The majority of students took part in placements that included digital media projects (e.g., design of digital artefacts for websites, social media or print).
- 20% of students worked on technology plus projects (e.g., develop a technical solution to a problem showcasing coding and technical skills).
- 17.5% of student were involved in digital technology projects (e.g., redesign or improve an existing technical solution in areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence).
- 15% of students were involved in video editing projects (e.g., develop a promotional video that launches a product/service to a particular target market).
- Less than 10% of students reported involvement in sustainability and environmental, data analytics, legal, or recruitment campaign projects.
- About one-fifth of students did not identify the type/category of placement project.

[14] Percentages do not total 100 as students could select one or more response. Blended approaches were used at least partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 5: Types of projects during work experience placement

Project type	% of respondents
Digital media	60.0
Technology plus (some coding/programming interest/experience required)	20.0
Digital technology (no coding/programming required)	17.5
Video editing	15.0
Sustainability and environmental	7.5
Data analytics	7.5
Legal	5.0
Recruitment campaign	2.5
Don't know/not sure	22.5

Students' views on the work experience placement

Students rated their P-TECH work experience placement in a number of areas (poor, fair, good) (see Table 6).

Table 6: Students' views of the work experience placement

	Poor	Fair	Good	Not applicable
	%	%	%	%
Preparation and choice				
Work placement preparation at school	15.0	25.0	57.5	2.5
Initial information	22.5	22.5	55.0	-
Choice of placement options	20.5	33.3	43.6	2.6
Placement experience				
Welcome/integration into the workplace environment	10.3	30.8	59.0	-
Support and guidance provided by the placement supervisor/mentor	17.5	30.0	50.0	2.5
Workshops/training sessions	15.0	37.5	47.5	-
Tasks given to do on the placement	15.0	40.0	45.0	-
Job explorations/shadowing	22.5	30.0	45.0	2.5
Social activities	22.5	35.0	40.0	2.5
Mystery events	50.0	10.0	35.0	5.0
Skills				
Gaining new skills	7.5	22.5	70.0	-
Preparing you for the 'world of work'	7.5	25.0	67.5	-
Satisfaction				
Overall experience of the placement	10.0	22.5	67.5	-
Enjoyment of the placement	12.5	25.0	62.5	-
Interest in the placement	12.5	27.5	60.0	-

Preparation and choice

- Just over half of students rated as good the school preparation for placements.
- Over half of students also rated as good the initial information provided about the placements.
- About two-fifths of students rated the choice of placement options as good.

Placement experience

- Over half of students rated as good the welcome and integration into the workplace environment; a similar percentage rated as good the support and guidance provided by the placement supervisor/mentor.

- Nearly one-quarter of students rated as poor their experiences of job explorations/shadowing. The same percentage rated their experiences of social activities as 'poor'.
- Half of the students rated the mystery events as poor.

Skills

- Over two-thirds of students rated the placements as good with respect to gaining new skills (e.g., report writing and presentation skills), or preparing them for the 'world of work' (e.g., communication and teamwork).

Satisfaction

- About two-thirds of students rated their interest, enjoyment or overall work placement experience as good.

Work experience placement ratings

Students rated how likely they were to recommend the P-TECH work experience placement to another student (Not at all likely [0] to Extremely likely [10]). Of the 40 respondents, the number of students considered to be detractors, passives and promoters are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Students' net promoter ratings for the work experience placement

0 Not at all likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely likely
3 (6%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	-	1 (2%)	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	3 (6%)	8 (16%)	2 (4%)	9 (18%)
Detractors (Ratings 0-6) (n=18; 36.7%)							**Passives (Ratings 7-8) (n=11; 22.4%)**		**Promoters (Ratings 9-10) (n=11; 22.4%)**	

- Over one-third of students were detractors and unlikely to recommend the work experience placements to other students; 22.4% of students were passives or neutral, and 22.4% of students were likely to promote placements.

Improvements to the work experience placement

Students also suggested improvements that could be made to the P-TECH work placement. In total, 18 students provided response(s) to this question. The suggested improvements were as follows:

- need for better communication between students, mentors, and organisers (50%);
- more support from mentors and placement organisers (28%);
- better organisation and logistics for placements (28%);
- greater clarity on the P-TECH projects and expectations for placement students (17%);
- more benefits for students, for example, payment or food (17%).

Future plans of P-TECH students

Intention upon leaving school

Students were asked to indicate from a list of options what they were most likely to do when they leave school (see Table 8).[15]

- The majority of students reported that they intended to go on to higher or further education courses.
- A small percentage of students intended to join the defence forces or Gardaí; take up apprenticeship/traineeship; or take a 'year out' before college.
- No students reported their intention to repeat the Leaving Certificate or intended to go directly to work when they leave school (i.e., get a full-time job or get an unpaid internship).

Table 8: Percentages of students reporting intended options after leaving school

	%
Higher Education course (University or Institute of Technology)	57.8
Further Education course (PLC)	28.9
Apply to join the defence forces or Gardaí	4.4
Other (not specified)	4.4
Apprenticeship or traineeship	2.2
Take a 'year out' before going to college	2.2
Repeat the Leaving Certificate	0
Get a full-time job	0
Get an unpaid internship	0

Further education: Field of study

For students who selected Higher Education course, Further Education course (PLC), Apprenticeship or traineeship, they were also asked if they had decided on the course or subject or trade they would like to pursue.

Findings show that 90.0 % of students indicated that knew what they would like to study or do. Of these students, a large majority (69 %) provided details of their first preference course. The courses were coded using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).[16] This is the international classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by levels and fields. The results are shown in Figure 10 across 10 broad fields of study.

- The highest percentages of responses were in the field of study of Business, Administration and Law.
- Less than one-in-five of the responses were in the field of Information, Communication and Technologies (ICT).
- About one-in-ten responses were in the field of Health and Welfare.
- About 8 % of responses were in the fields of Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction; Arts and Humanities; Services or Social Sciences, Journalism and Information.
- Only 2.8 % of responses were in the field of Education.

[15] Options provided were based on https://www.growingup.gov.ie/pubs/Young-Person-Main-Questionnaire-17_18-years.pdf
[16] Fields of education and training 2013: https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-detailed-field-descriptions-2015-en.pdf

- No students provided responses in the two broad fields of study of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary or Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics.

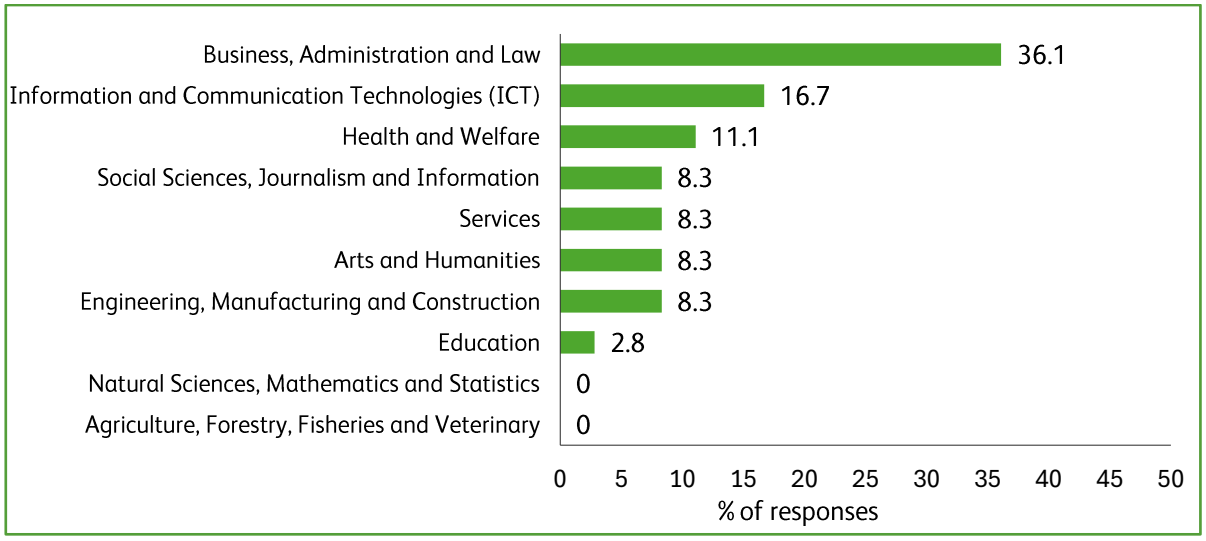

Figure 10: Respondents' course selection by ISCED broad field of study

Career aspirations

Students were asked what job they would like to get when they have finished their education. Students (n=35; 71.4 %) gave free text responses to the question. Out of the 35 responding students, 11.4 % did not know what job they would like to get.

When a student listed more than one choice, these multiple occupations were coded and included in the analyses. There was a variety of occupations nominated, with 25 different choices represented as a Word Cloud in Figure 11.[17] Note that some responses were removed from the analysis due to lack of information or irrelevant content (e.g., "being rich").

Figure 11: Occupations students would like to get in the future

The occupations provided by students were also coded using the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) classification structure for organising information

[17] A 'word cloud' is a visual representation of word frequency. The more commonly the term appears within the text being analysed, the larger the word appears in the image generated. Due to the small number of survey respondents, words that appear once appear smaller in the word cloud and words that appear at least twice are larger.

on labour and jobs.[18] A total of 36 responses from 35 students were provided. Responses included 25 different job types. Table 9 presents the percentages of the job titles classified into the ISCO-08 major categories.

Table 9: Job titles coded to the ISCO-08 major groups

ISCO-08 Major groups	% of responses
Professionals	50.0
Technicians and Associate Professionals	22.2
Managers	16.7
Services and Sales workers	8.3
Craft and Related Trades Workers	2.8

- The most frequently reported job titles were categorised as professionals. This category includes a wide range of occupations requiring specialised knowledge, expertise, and often formal qualifications (e.g., doctors, lawyers, engineers, and accountants, among others).
- Just over one-fifth of responses were classified as technicians and associate professionals. These occupations typically involve applying specialised knowledge and skills in specific technical or practical areas (e.g., medical technicians, IT support specialists, and engineering technicians, among others).
- Almost one-in-five responses were classified as managers (e.g., sale managers, project managers, and executive directors, among others).
- 8.3 % of the jobs were classified as services and sales workers (e.g., customer service representatives, retail sales associates and nail technicians, among others).
- A small percentage of responses (2.8 %) specified an interest in pursuing careers as craft and related trades workers (e.g., carpenters, electricians, and digital technicians, among others).

Based on the ISCO-08 hierarchical structure, every major occupational group consists of two or more sub-major groups. These sub-major groups are combined based on the similarity of occupational areas. The percentages of students in each of the combined sub-major ISCO-08 categories with expected occupations are displayed in Table 10.

- The largest proportion of specified occupations (27.8 %) was in the field of science, technology, engineering, and information technology (STEM).
- The second most popular choice for students were careers in the business and administration sector (25.0 %).
- 16.7 % of the job titles related to roles such as administrative and commercial managers, as well as production and specialised services managers. These also included roles such as human resources manager, product manager and business analyst.
- 11.1 % of the job titles were in careers within the healthcare sector or legal, social, and cultural professions.

[18] ISCO-08 classifies jobs into 436-unit groups. These unit groups are aggregated into 130 minor groups, 43 sub-major groups and 10 major groups, based on their similarity in terms of the skill level and skill specialisation required for the jobs. International Labour Office. (2012). *International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 (ISCO-08): structure, group definitions and correspondence tables.* Geneva: International Labour Office.

- A small number of responses indicated an interest in personal services occupations and handicraft work.

Table 10: Job titles coded in each of the sub-major ISCO-08 groups

ISCO-08 sub-major group	% of responses
Science and Engineering Professionals, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Professionals, Associate Professionals and ICT Technicians	27.8
Business and Administration Professionals and Associate Professionals	25.0
Administrative, Commercial, Production and Services Managers	16.7
Health Professionals and Personal Care Workers	11.1
Legal, Social and Cultural Professionals and Associate Professionals	11.1
Personal Services Workers and Handicraft Workers	8.3

Intention to continue with P-TECH after school

The percentages of students who expressed an interest in continuing with P-TECH after school are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Students' level of interest in continuing with P-TECH after school

	%
I do not intend to be involved with P-TECH	46.7
I am undecided	20.0
I am interested in working in this area but unsure about continuing my education	15.6
I am interested in applying to the P-TECH Digital and Business Skills (DABS) course	15.6
I would like to do a course in this general area but not the specific P-TECH 'DABS' course	2.2

- Just under half of students did not intend to continue with P-TECH.
- One-in-five students were undecided about the option to continue.
- About 15% of students were interested in applying to the P-TECH Digital and Business Skills (DABS) course with a similar percentage of students interested in working in the area but unsure about continuing their education.

Global satisfaction with P-TECH

Students' satisfaction with their overall experience of the P-TECH programme at Senior Cycle (from Transition Year to Sixth Year) is shown in Figure 12. Of the 44 respondents, 47.7 % were satisfied/very satisfied with their experience of the programme.

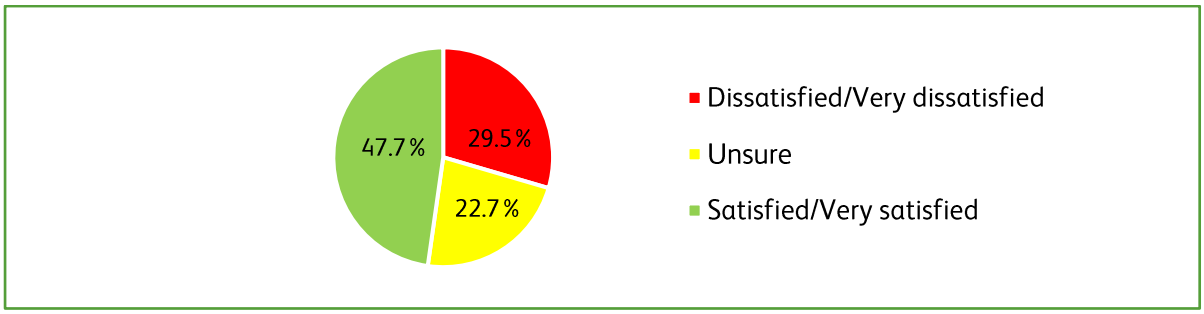

Figure 12: Students' overall satisfaction with the P-TECH programme

The extent to which students felt that P-TECH is preparing them for their future career or further education is shown in Figure 13. The majority of students reported that P-TECH was preparing them to some extent (56.8 %).

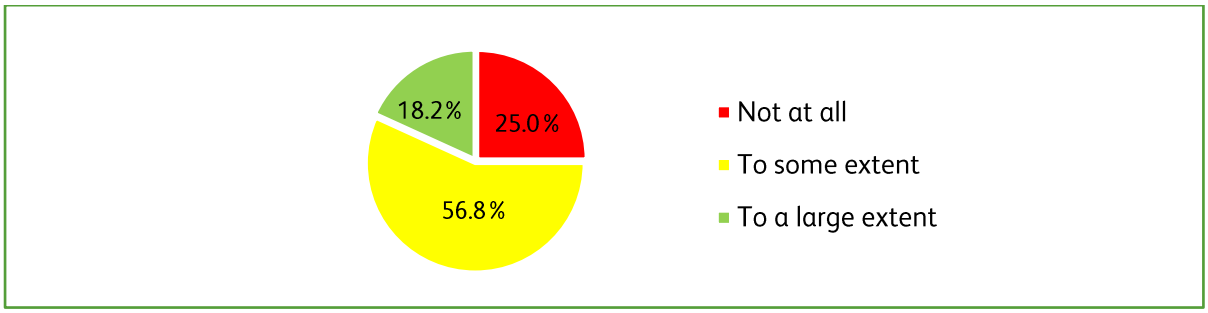

Figure 13: Students' views on extent to which P-TECH is preparing them for future career or education

P-TECH programme ratings

Students rated how likely it is that they would recommend the P-TECH programme to another student (Not at all likely [0] to Extremely likely [10]). Of the 44 respondents, the number of students considered to be detractors, passives and promoters of the P-TECH programme are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Students' net promoter ratings for the P-TECH programme

0 Not at all likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely likely
6 (14 %)	3 (7 %)	1 (2 %)	3 (7 %)	2 (4 %)	7 (16 %)	4 (9 %)	4 (9 %)	6 (14 %)	1 (2 %)	7 (16 %)
Detractors (Ratings 0-6) (n=26; 59.1%)							**Passives (Ratings 7-8) (n=10; 22.7%)**		**Promoters (Ratings 9-10) (n=8; 18.2%)**	

- The majority of students were detractors and unlikely to recommend the P-TECH programme to other students.
- About 23 % of students were passives or neutral and about 18 % of students were likely to promote the P-TECH programme.

Final comments

Enjoyed most about P-TECH

Students were asked to describe what they enjoyed *most* about P-TECH. The majority of students (n=38; 78%) provided a text response for the activities and experiences they enjoyed most, and these were coded into five themes as shown in Figure 14. Illustrative examples of responses are also provided.

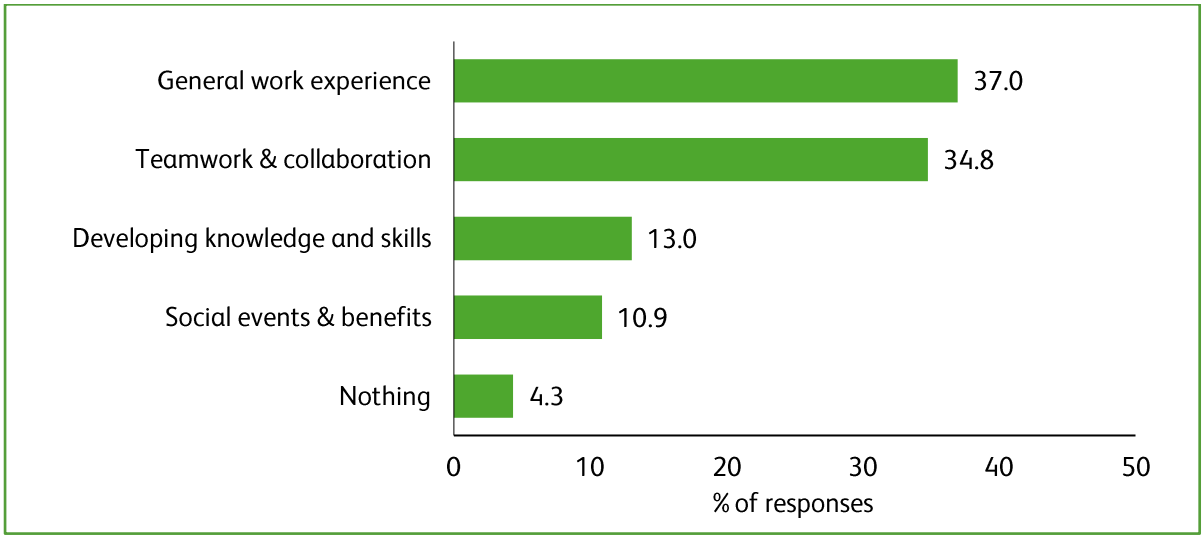

Figure 14: What students said they enjoyed *most* about P-TECH

- Over two-fifths of the responses highlighted enjoyment of the work experience placements offered in P-TECH
- 34.8% of the responses referenced the teamwork and collaboration elements of P-TECH.
- 13.0% of the responses referenced students' development of their knowledge and skills.
- Just 10.9% of responses highlighted the additional benefits provided in P-TECH such as free food and social gatherings.
- A small percentage of the responses (4.3%) indicated that students did not enjoy any aspect of the P-TECH programme.

TY work experience and social gatherings.

Work experience and the National College of Ireland trips were my highlights.

I enjoyed being able to study something I did not have knowledge about and gain more skills in such a short period of time I was very satisfied by the project.

Development of creativity.

Going into the workplace, communicating and working together with people that I normally wouldn't talk to.

Enjoyed least about P-TECH

Students were also asked about what they *least* enjoyed about P-TECH. Over three-quarters (n=39; 79.5 %) responded. Responses were grouped into six themes as shown in Figure 15. Illustrative examples of student responses are also provided.

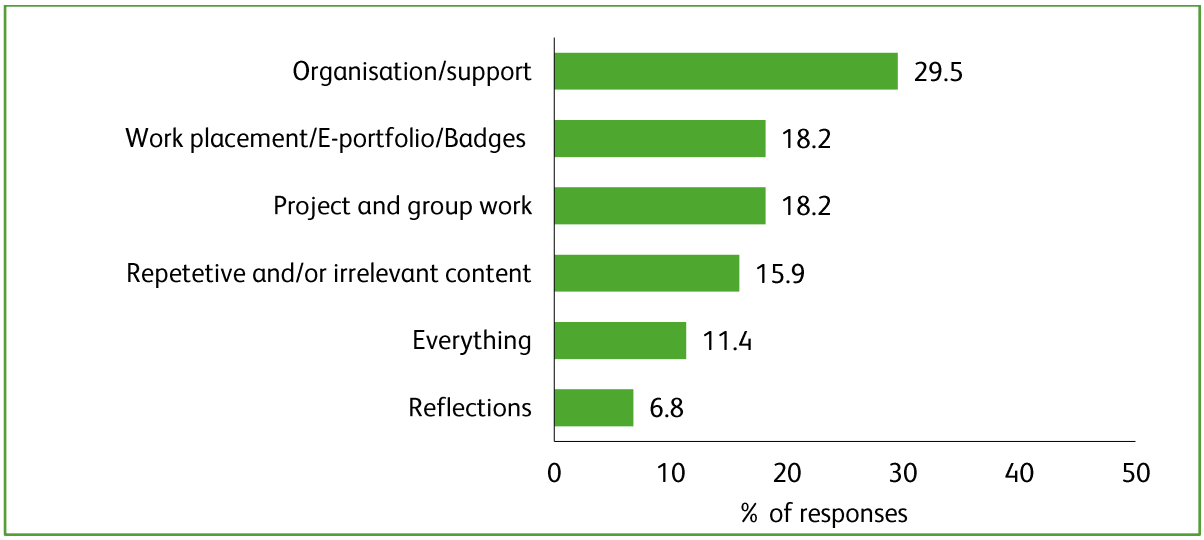

Figure 15: What students said they enjoyed *least* about P-TECH

- The most common theme suggested that the organisation and the support/help students received was the least enjoyable aspect of P-TECH.
- About 18 % of the responses indicated that students did not enjoy the following P-TECH elements: work placement, e-portfolio and badges or the project/group work.
- Some respondents suggested that the programme content was repetitive or irrelevant.
- About one-in-ten of the responses indicated that students were unhappy with P-TECH in general.
- A small percentage of responses specified that the reflections required in P-TECH were the least enjoyable element of P-TECH.

Too much of the reflection sheets.

The projects were repetitive.

Lack of contribution from others.

Some of the projects (either too boring or felt pointless/unhelpful).

The disorganisation at times and confusion due to the extent of work.

Disorganisation. On both teachers and the companies. Especially regarding the internship. There was always a goal but no clear way of reaching it, it was as if it was some sort of secret. In the future this will improve since now there is a previous group to base things on (us).

it was very all over the place when it started, not what we were told it was going to be.

Some of the tasks weren't labelled fully and there were often times we were unsure of what to do.

Most memorable experience in P-TECH

Students had the option to describe their *most memorable experience* during their time in the P-TECH programme (n=38; 77.5 %). Responses were grouped into four themes as shown in Figure 16 with some illustrative examples of responses.

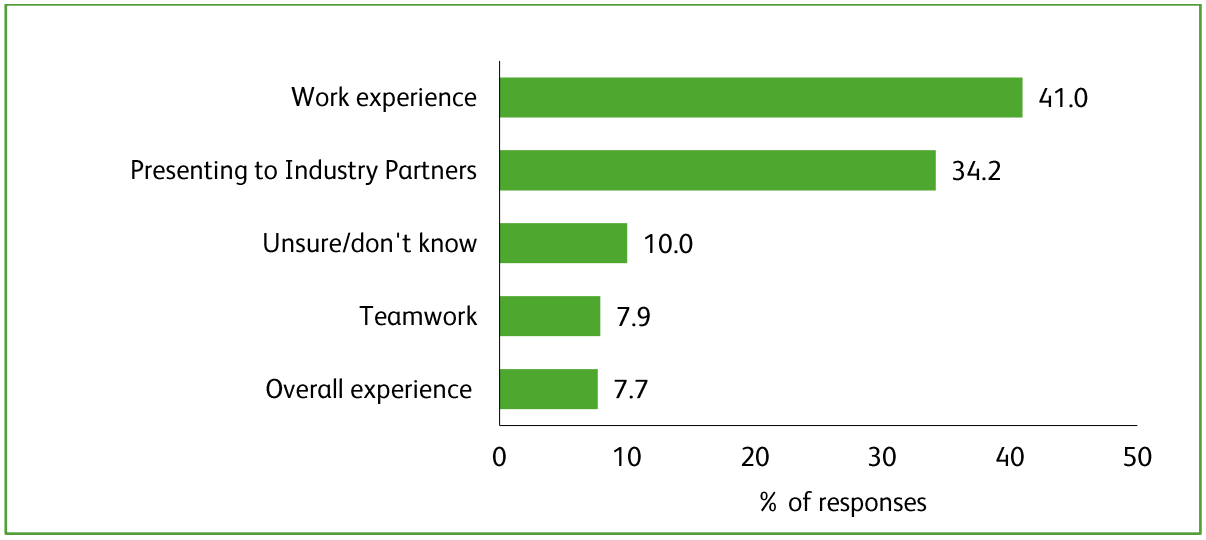

Figure 16: Students' *most memorable experience* in P-TECH

- Over two-fifths of responses specified that the work placement experience was the most memorable experience.
- About 34.2 % of responses suggested that the presentations to industry partners was the most memorable experience for students.
- About 10 % of respondents were unsure or did not know what their most memorable experience had been.
- 7.9 % of responses highlighted the most memorable experience was working in a team.
- A small number of responses indicated that the overall experience of P-TECH was memorable without giving specific details.

When everything started to make sense and connect, and I understood how important P-TECH could be very beneficial for people.

Learning in a group of people that you don't usually work with made fun memories.

The large presentation at the end with industry partners and figures was a great time.

The work placement felt like actual work, I grew closer to people I worked with. The mentors and our supervisor were very sweet, and they were all helpful. Good experience.

Recommendations for P-TECH

Students had the option to provide their recommendations for P-TECH (e.g., anything that should be changed, done differently or improved). Responses (n=31; 63.2 %) were grouped into six themes as shown in Figure 17 with illustrative examples of responses.

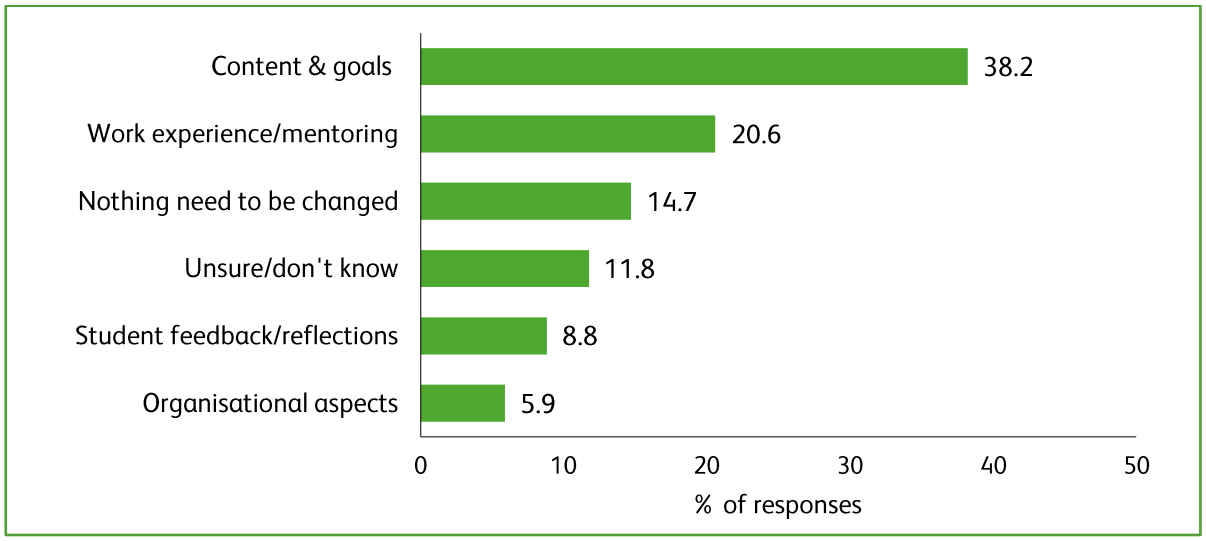

Figure 17: Students' recommendation for P-TECH

- Over two-thirds of responses suggested the need for further clarification of the programme content and objectives for students.
- About one-in-five of responses called for enhanced opportunities for job experience and improvements to the mentoring experience.
- On the positive side, 14.7 % of responses specified that the programme is adequate for student needs and does not need to be changed.
- Another 11.8 % of responses were unsure or did not know what changes might be needed.
- Feedback and the requirement for reflections within P-TECH were also mentioned as areas in need of improvement.
- A small percentage of responses (5.9 %) mentioned that the organisation of P-TECH required improvement. There was some acknowledgment that they were the first cohort of students in P-TECH Ireland and that the experiences of students who came after them may be better.

Give students more information about what is the subject and what they are going to be dealing with for the next 3 years.

Let students provide truthful feedback, sometimes students are too afraid to speak about things they don't like, Allowing them to offer feedback will help the whole system a lot.

Nothing should change.

Less reflections, more teamwork.

More mentor help, and more group options.

Summary

Who took part in the survey?

- The survey aimed to capture the experiences of the first cohort of students in Ireland to participate in P-TECH. Sixth Year students in three schools in the school year 2023/24 were invited to provide their views.
- The response rate was 63.6%. It should be noted that as with any survey research, the findings of this report may not reflect the views of those who did not respond. Views may also differ between the schools but analysis by school characteristics was not conducted due to the small number of participating schools.
- Of respondents, 57.1% identified as male; 38.8% as female and 4.1% as non-binary, a-gender or gender fluid.
- The majority of students reported that they spoke English most often at home (63.3%).
- The majority of students were enrolled on the Established Leaving Certificate programme (93.9%).

Lateness, truancy and authorised absence

- Arriving late for school was a common occurrence with over one-quarter of students reporting that they had been late to school more than 20 times in the current school year.
- About 14% of students reported that truancy (including missing classes or whole school days) had occurred more than 20 times in the school year.

Students' views on school

- Students' views on school were somewhat divided with about one-third of students disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that they looked forward to school. Just over one-third of students (36.7%) agreed/strongly agreed that they looked forward to school on most days.
- Active engagement happens when students are deeply involved in the learning process as demonstrated by an enthusiasm and desire to learn new things. Just over half of students reported that they enjoyed being in school. About two-fifths of students agreed/strongly agreed that school is boring. The majority of students agreed/strongly agreed that they enjoyed learning new things, that they learn things that are interesting to them at school, or that they find learning to be fun. However, just over one-third of students agreed/strongly agreed that they liked challenging assignments.
- In general, students held positive view of their teachers with the majority of students in agreement that their teachers are friendly (75.5%). Most agreed that they could talk to their teachers if they had a problem (67.3%).
- Students were positive about the impact of their education and school in achieving their future goals. Most students planned to continue their education following college (85.7%) although fewer students agreed/strongly agreed that going to college after school is important (59.2%). Students were hopeful about their future (83.7% agreeing/strongly agreeing).

Students' experience of P-TECH

Implementation and delivery

- Students enjoyed the group work, collaboration or interaction with other P-TECH students (>70 % satisfied).
- In terms of assessments, about half of the students were satisfied with the grading and assessment guidance and procedures, peer feedback or teacher feedback.
- Educational taster sessions (guest speakers from industry and higher education) were viewed positively (49 % satisfied).
- About two-fifths of students were satisfied with the classroom sessions given by the P-TECH teachers, online and blended teaching methods and E-Portfolio development.
- Just over one third of students were satisfied with the Digital (SkillsBuild) badges; a similar percentage was satisfied with the overall content covered in P-TECH including the modules and courses.

Industry activities

- Students were satisfied with the work placement opportunities (77 % satisfied).
- Just over half of students were satisfied with the support provided by P-TECH industry partners and half were satisfied with the feedback they received from workplace mentors.

Organisation and resources

- About half of students were satisfied with the P-TECH virtual learning environment and a similar percentage was satisfied the availability of resources in P-TECH.
- Students had mixed views on the overall organisation and administration of P-TECH (28.6 % dissatisfied; 36.7 % satisfied).

Learning outcomes

- The P-TECH abilities framework outlines the learning goals and skills and assessment choices for the students over the programmes.
- Students' reflections on their learning were largely positive. The majority of students (>80 %) reported that P-TECH supported their development in various skill areas or abilities to a small/large extent.
- In some skill areas, about one-fifth of students reported that P-TECH had not supported their development. These areas were: improving overall resilience; developing the ability to stay motivated in pursuing goals and aspirations; identifying learning opportunities in challenges; helping to decide what to do after school; increasing self-belief and self-confidence and developing problem-solving skills.
- While the survey focused on students' own perceptions of their learning, a limitation of this analysis is that there was no triangulation using other data sources, such as module outcomes or results held by the schools.

Mentoring

- The number of students with an assigned industry partner mentor dropped across the Senior Cycle years with 85.7 % students having a mentor at Transition Year compared to 65.3 % of students at Fifth Year and 42.9 % at Sixth Year. Only 36.7 % of students had a mentor across all three years of the Senior Cycle. This is in part due to students' choice not to have a mentor in the final two years at Senior Cycle.

- About one-quarter of students reported contact with their mentors on a monthly basis or once a week basis.
- One-third of students were happy with the availability the availability of the P-TECH mentor for guidance and support when needed (32.7 % satisfied/very satisfied).
- About one-third of students rated the relationship with their P-TECH mentor as poor or fair.
- Students found P-TECH mentoring valuable in a number of areas including helping them learn professional skills, planning future careers and supporting the P-TECH work placement (>80 % to some/large extent).
- There is scope for improvement in the P-TECH mentoring experience in terms of mentor availability and the development of more positive mentor and mentee relationships.

Work experience placements

- There was high uptake of the work experience placements in Transition Year (81.6 % of students).
- The majority of work experience placements were hosted, at least in part, onsite at the industry partners' premises (62.5 %). Accommodations made to the work experience process due to COVID-19 resulted in off-site placements at locations other than the industry partners' offices (32.5 %) and the use of online/blended approaches (27.5 %).
- A range of projects were available to placement students. There was a strong emphasis on digital media projects (60 %). About one-fifth of students worked on technology plus projects or digital technology projects. Few students were involved in projects under the themes of sustainability and environmental, data analytics, legal, or recruitment.
- Based on students' reports, the information provided to them and the range of placement options could be improved. About half of students rated the preparation for placements at school and the initial information about placements as good. Only two-fifths of students rated the choice of placement options as good.
- In relation to the placement experience, over half of the students rated as good the welcome and integration into the workplace environment and the support and guidance provided by the placement supervisor/mentor. There appears to be scope for better initiation and support for students throughout the placement.
- Just under half of students rated the tasks given to do on the placement, workshops/training sessions, job explorations/shadowing and the social activities provided during the placement as good. Mystery events were rated as poor by half of the respondents.
- Positive outcomes of the placement experience were reported by about two-thirds of students both in gaining new skills and preparing students for the 'world of work'.
- About two-thirds of students rated their interest, enjoyment or overall work placement experience as good.
- Students' suggestions for improvements to the work experience placements included: better communication between students, mentors and organisers; more support from mentors and placement organisers; better organisation of the placements; additional clarity on the work placement projects and the provision of benefits for students during the placement.

Future aspirations

- In considering what they would like to do when they leave school, a small percentage of students intended: to join the defence forces or Gardaí; take up apprenticeship/traineeship or take a 'year out' before college.
- No students reported that their intention was to repeat the Leaving Certificate or saw themselves in work immediately after leaving school (get a full-time job or get an unpaid internship).
- The majority of students intended to continue in formal education after school, intending to pursue either higher (58.8 %) or further education (28.9 %) courses.
- For students who intended to continue in further education, over one-third of respondents listed their preferred courses in the field of Business, Administration, and Law. Less than one-in-five respondents listed courses in the field of Information, Communication, and Technologies (ICT), and 11.1 % of respondents listed courses related to Health and Welfare. The fields of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Veterinary and Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Statistics were not included in the course options chosen by respondents. The pattern of course preferences are consistent with the trends observed in the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) Student Progression Data for 2021-2022, which identified the top three most common fields of study for new entrants as follows: studying Business, Administration, and Law (19 %), studying Arts and Humanities (18 %) and 15 % studying Health and Welfare (HEA, 2024).[19]
- In terms of future employment, there was a wide variety of occupations nominated by the students with 25 different choices. The most frequently reported job titles were categorised in the ISCO-08 major group of professionals. The largest number of responses were in the science, technology, engineering, and information technology sector, with students also drawn to business and administration roles. This suggests a strong preference among students towards professional and technical careers, with interest in STEM and the business/administrative occupations.
- A small number of students expressed interest in applying to the P-TECH Digital and Business Skills (DABS) course (15 %). However, the majority of students did not intend to continue with P-TECH after post-primary school (46.7 %).

Students' satisfaction with P-TECH

- Over half of students reported that P-TECH was preparing them for their future career or further education to some extent (56.8 %).
- About 47.7 % of students were satisfied/very satisfied with their overall experience of the programme
- The elements of P-TECH that the students enjoyed the *most* included: the work experience placements; teamworking opportunities and collaborative work; development of their knowledge and skills; and the social events and other benefits. A small percentage of students did not enjoy any aspect of the P-TECH programme.
- The elements of P-TECH that the students enjoyed *least* included: the organisation of P-TECH and support offered to students; work placements; the online work on E-portfolios and badges; working on group projects; the repetitive nature of some tasks/projects; and the reflections required on their work.
- The *most memorable* student experiences in P-TECH focused on the work experience placement; student presentations to industry partners at the end of work experience placements; opportunities to work in team with students and mentors; the overall experience of P-TECH and events such as graduation.

[19] https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2024/03/Exploring-Student-Progression-in-Higher-Education-Conference-Final.pdf

- Students' suggestions for improvement to the P-TECH programme for other students included: clearer information on the programme's content and goals; more information for students on P-TECH in general; clearer instructions for projects/tasks during work experience placements and allowing students to provide ongoing feedback throughout the programme. A small percentage of students were satisfied and said nothing needs to change.

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