Given the success of women in physics the question must be asked, why don’t more girls take the subject at school level?

A 2015 report from Accenture sought answers to this and noted that the influence of parents was significant in this area with a parental lack of knowledge of STEM opportunities being an issue. The Institute of Physics and Dublin City University are addressing this particular aspect by adopting a whole school approach to gender issues including running career sessions with parents.

### Challenges

1 in 4 teachers believe that promotion of traditional ‘girl career paths’ contributes to the stereotype that STEM subjects are more suited to males than females.

68% of parents are not well informed on STEM career opportunities.

Lack of 2nd level teachers qualified in Physics...

6.6% of leaving cert teachers.

16.6% of junior cert teachers.

### Why study STEM subjects? according to Irish school girls

- 59% Providing a wider range of life skills
- 59% Enjoyment of course content
- 69% Job enjoyment
- 59% Chance to invent new products / services
- 59% The chance to cure diseases

### Grant Applications to the Irish Research Council - 2013-2016

- Women comprised 23% of applicants
- Overall success rate only 20%

### Leaving Cert Physics

- A or B grades in Higher level papers
- 44%
- 48%

- For ungraded in Higher level papers
- 4%
- 2%

### Undergraduates

- 2013: 82% boys, 18% girls
- 2014: 82% boys, 18% girls
- 2015: 75% boys, 25% girls
- 2016: 79% boys, 21% girls

### Postgraduate

- 2013: 80% boys, 20% girls
- 2014: 79% boys, 21% girls
- 2015: 76% boys, 24% girls
- 2016: 70% boys, 30% girls

### Positives

- 169,000 people employed in physics-based industries in Ireland
- 8.6% of the total workforce

### Ireland has 2 HEI’s with Juno Practitioner status and 2 with Juno Supporter status

### Initiatives launched & reports published such as National Review of Gender in Irish Higher Education Institutions

### Athena Swan launched in Ireland, and required for Grant applications from 2019

### Hopes for the future

- €48.7 bn turnover generated by physics-based industries
- 14% of overall turnover in Ireland’s business economy

- 86% of girls believe the subjects they choose, or chose, at school are likely to impact the career they have in later life

- 77% of young women believe they could earn a higher salary in the science and technology sector compared to other sectors

- 61% of girls believe they could earn a higher salary in the science and technology sector compared to other sectors

- 70% of young women believe they could earn a higher salary in the science and technology sector compared to other sectors

### References:

- Accenture (2015). Continuing to power economic growth: Attracting more young women into science and technology 2.0
- Teacher Numbers Source: Teaching Council of Ireland personal communication

*Leaving Cert refers to Upper Secondary and Junior Cert refers to Lower Secondary education sectors*