The IOP in Ireland carries out an annual survey of first year students in third level who are taking physics. The survey is designed to look at factors which influence students in making their decision to take the subject. 217 students at colleges across Ireland completed the survey during the academic year 2009-2010. A summary of their responses is given below. One particular point of note, in an open-ended question on areas of physics which attracted them, particle physics and astrophysics emerged as clear drivers of interest in the subject.

Did you study physics prior to undertaking this course?

- Yes: 77%
- No: 23%

How often did you have practical physics classes in school?

- Teacher demonstrations:
  - At least once a week: 40
  - At least once a month: 10
  - At least once every 2 months: 4
  - At least once every term: 1
  - At least once a year: 1
  - Never: 2

- Experiments carried out by students:
  - At least once a week: 40
  - At least once a month: 10
  - At least once every 2 months: 4
  - At least once every term: 1
  - At least once a year: 1
  - Never: 2
Influencing factors. How influential were the following in helping you to make your choice to study Physics?

- Ability in physics/math
- Interest in fundamental/big ideas
- School physics teacher
- Previous experience of subject in school
- Friends
- College staff
- Books/films
- Printed information on physics and careers

Events attended. How influential were the following in helping you choose your present physics course?

- College Open Day (chose...)
- College Open Day (other C...)
- Experiments/workshops...time
- Work experience/placement...
- Project entered in BT You...
- Project entered in Science Olympiad
- Project entered in StEn...