

# Physics students in Ireland



The Institute of Physics in Ireland (IOPi) has more than 2,000 members and is part of the Institute of Physics, which is a leading scientific society promoting physics and bringing physicists together for the benefit of all.

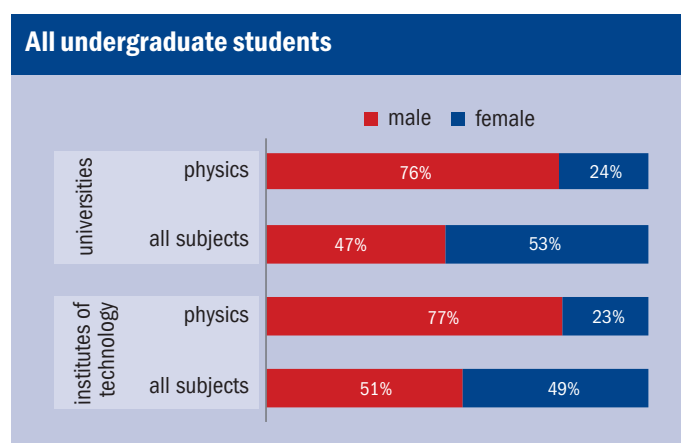
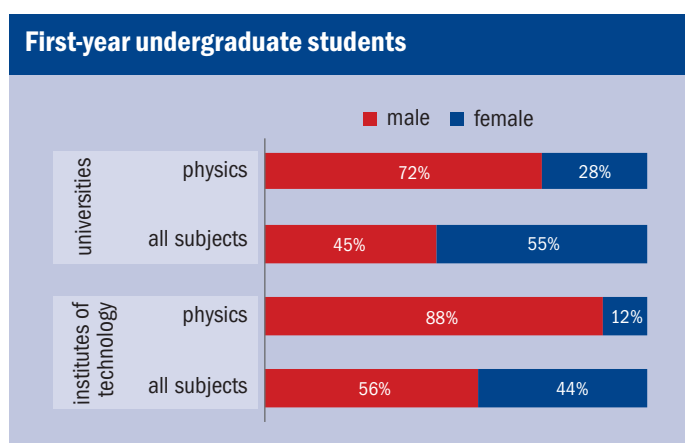
This briefing outlines a short set of statistics on students studying physics – and comparable subjects (mathematics, biology, chemistry and engineering)<sup>1</sup> and all subjects combined – in universities<sup>2</sup> and institutes of technology<sup>3</sup> in Ireland for the 2015/16 academic year. Data comes from the Higher Education Authority (Ireland).

The factors considered are:

- **Student numbers:** trends in physics students at universities and institutes of technology (between 2010/11 and 2015/16).
- **Gender:** at undergraduate<sup>4</sup>, Master's<sup>5</sup> and PhD level.
- **Domicile:** Ireland and Northern Ireland, UK excluding Northern Ireland, other EU countries or non-EU countries.
- **Comparisons with other subjects:** comparing physics with other selected STEM subjects and all subjects as a whole.

## Undergraduate students

Most students studying physics in Ireland at undergraduate and postgraduate level are based at universities. The numbers shown below are based on enrolments in physics for the 2015/16 academic year and compare these figures to other selected STEM subjects and all subjects as a whole.



<sup>1</sup> Engineering is calculated by summing the following subject codes from the HEA: 0710 – engineering and engineering trades not further defined or elsewhere classified, 0711 – chemical engineering, 0713 electricity and energy, and 0714 electronics and automation.

<sup>2</sup> Dublin City University, NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University of Limerick.

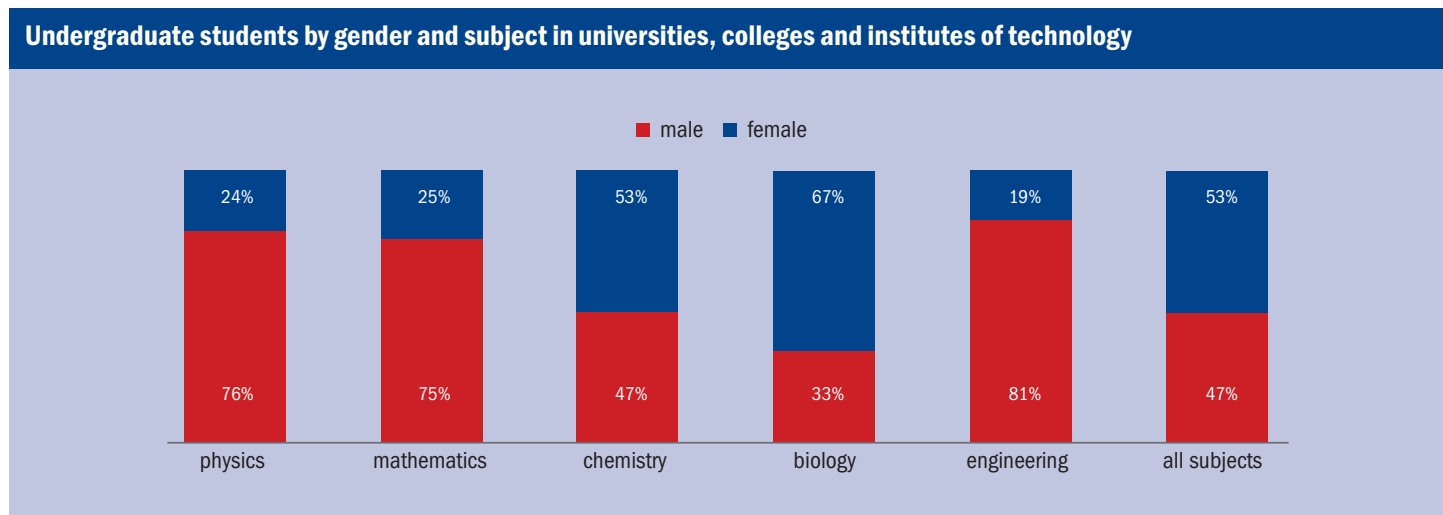
<sup>3</sup> Athlone IT, Cork IT, DIT, IADT, Dundalk IT, Galway-Mayo IT, IT Blanchardstown, IT Carlow, IT Sligo, IT Tallaght Dublin, IT Tralee, Letterkenny IT, Limerick IT, Waterford IT.

<sup>4</sup> Only honours degrees are considered.

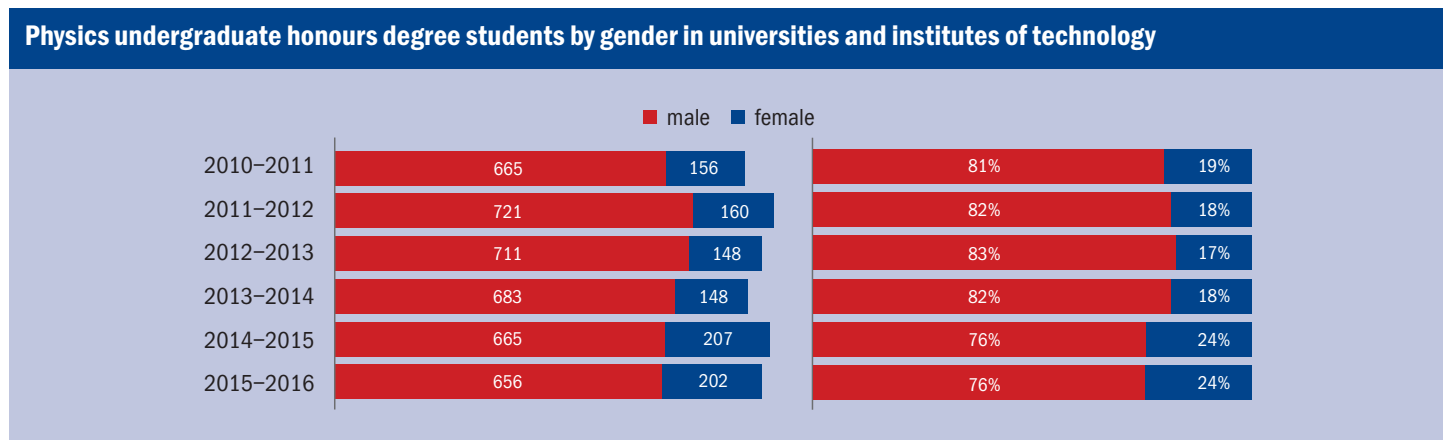
<sup>5</sup> This includes both taught and research Master's courses.



In both physics and mathematics only a quarter of students are female. Engineering has an even higher proportion of male students, whereas chemistry and biology, and all subjects as a whole, have a more balanced proportion of male and female students.

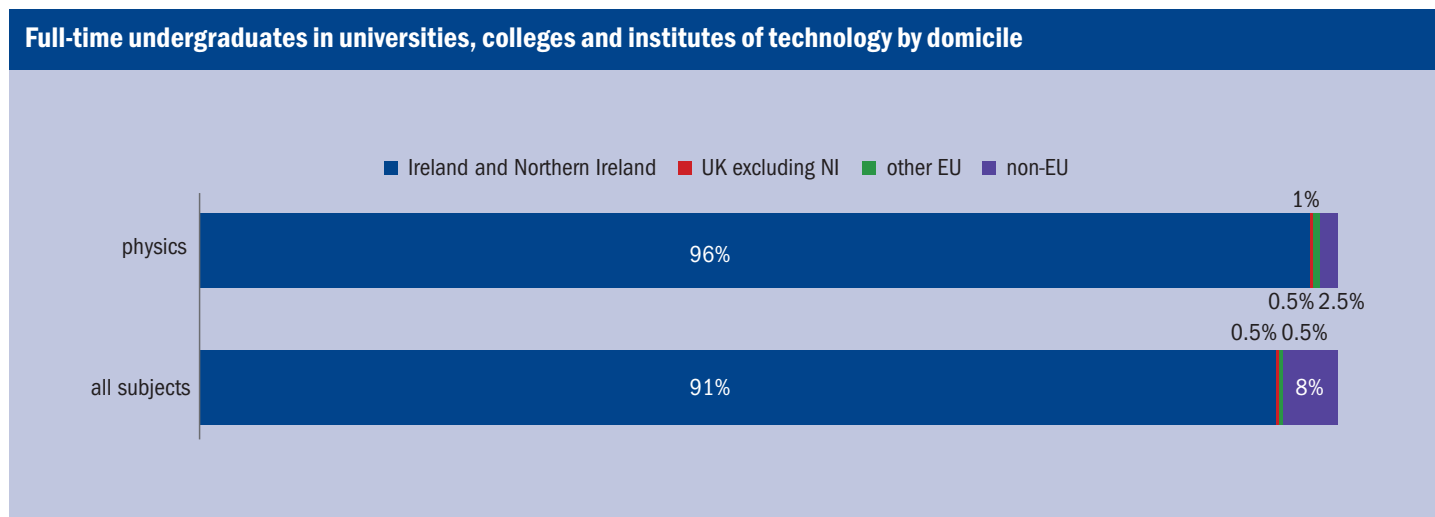


The trend data displayed in the chart below shows that while student numbers in physics have stayed roughly the same since the 2010/11 academic year, the proportion of female students has increased from less than 20% between 2010 and 2014 to 24% over the last two years.





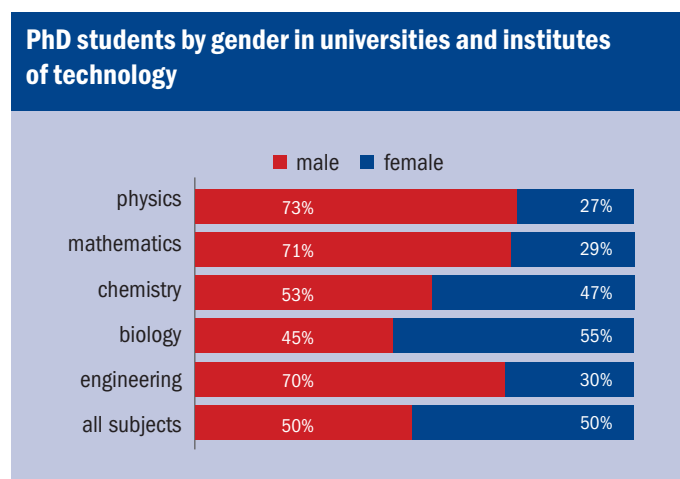
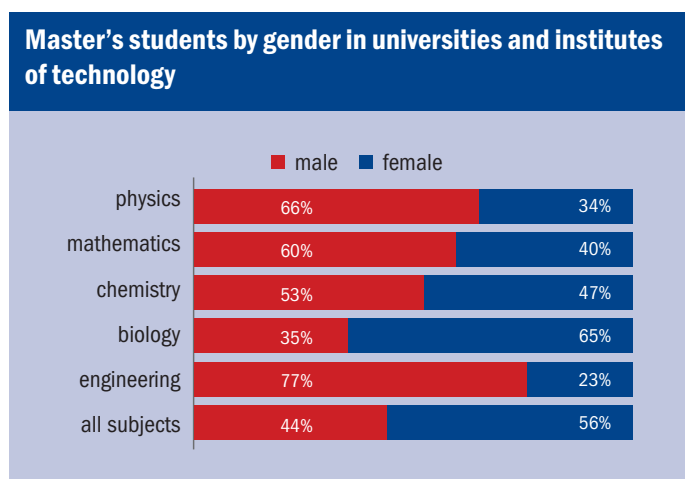
The majority of students studying for undergraduate honours degrees in physics in Ireland come from Ireland and Northern Ireland, as shown in the chart below. A smaller proportion of undergraduate students in physics come from non-EU countries than for all subjects. A larger proportion of undergraduate students in physics come from EU countries outside of the UK and Ireland than for all subjects.



### Postgraduate students

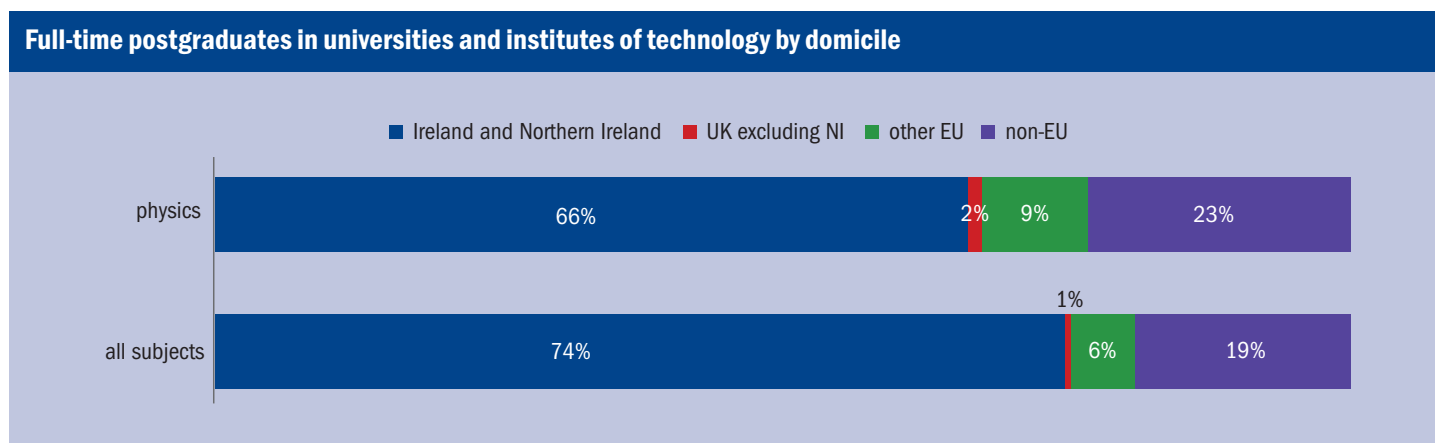
At Master's level there are a higher proportion of female students undertaking physics courses than at undergraduate level. However, the total number of students is much smaller. The balance of male students and female students is similar to the other selected comparable STEM subjects at all levels (with the exception of biology), but when all subjects are considered there are an equal proportion of male and female students.

At PhD level, the gender balance is similar to that at undergraduate level. A larger proportion of PhD students in Ireland (81%) are based at universities than at institutes of technology.



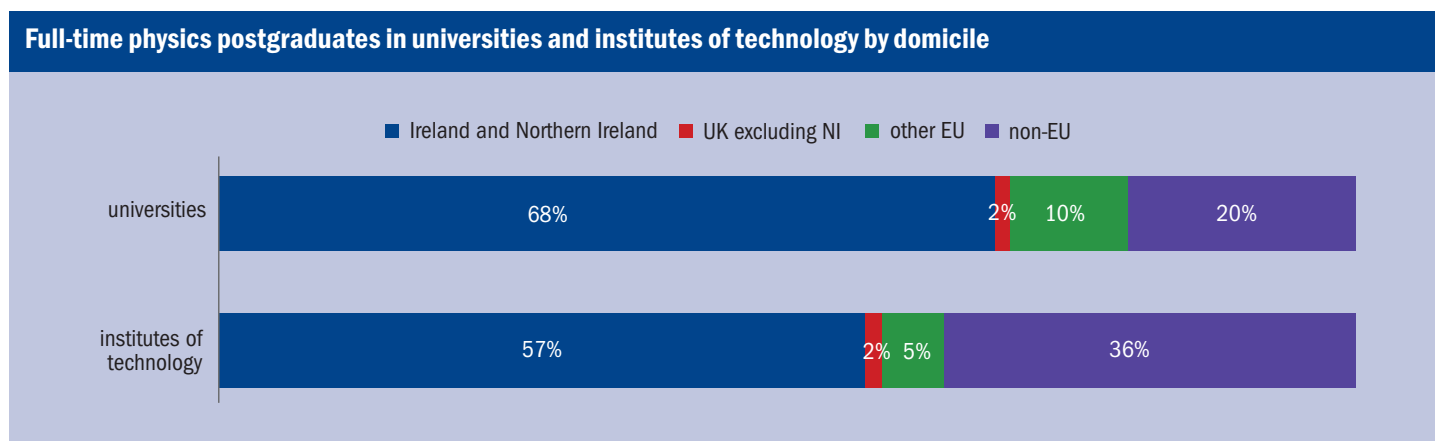


At postgraduate level (Master’s and PhD), a larger proportion of students come from EU countries outside of the UK and Ireland than at undergraduate level. Students from EU countries (excluding the UK and Ireland) make up 9% of the cohort compared to 6% for all subjects. Non-EU international students make up 23% of the cohort in physics at universities and institutes of technology compared to 19% for all subjects.



There were 283 students at universities and 58 at institutes of technology studying physics at postgraduate level (Master’s or PhD) in the 2015/16 academic year.

There is a larger proportion of non-EU students in the institutes of technology than in universities in Ireland, but a smaller proportion of EU students (excluding the UK and Ireland).



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