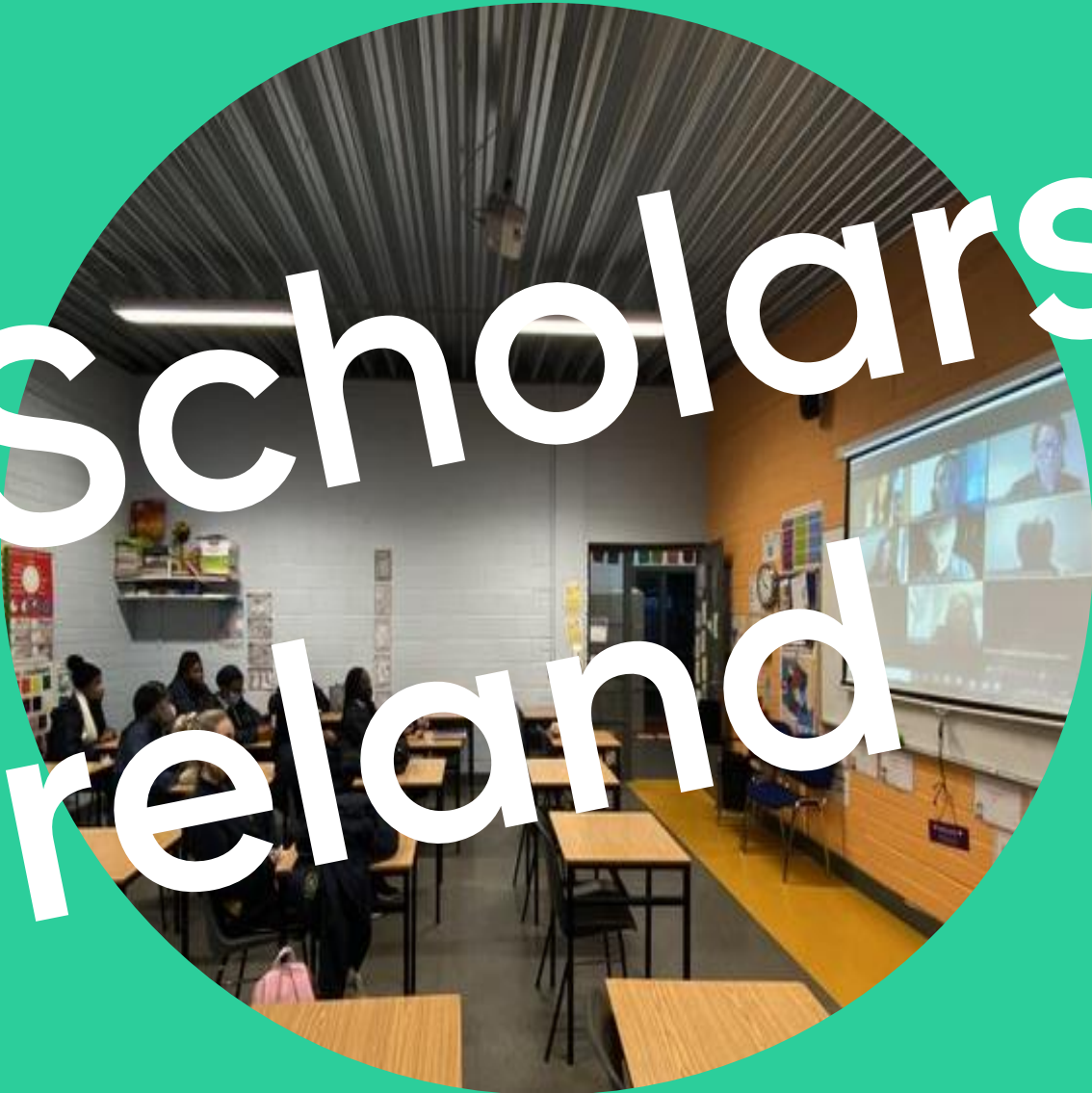


# Scholars Ireland



Trinity College Dublin  
Impact Report  
2020/21



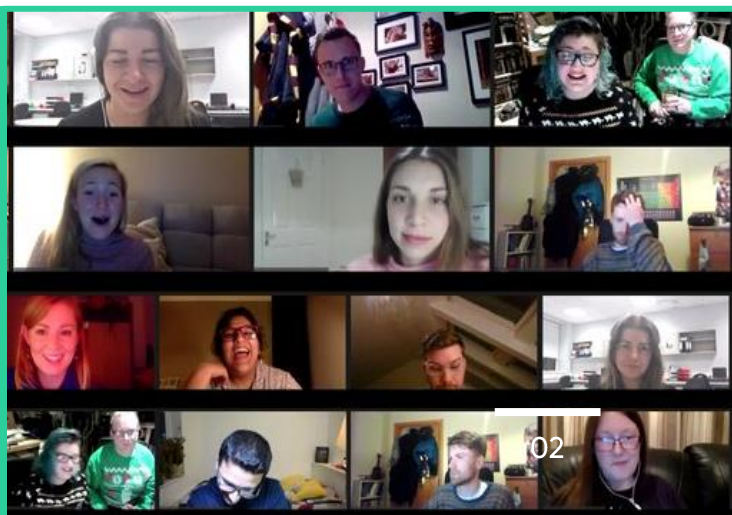
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The programme is a fantastic opportunity for students to start thinking about their future and to recognise that college is a possibility for them. Students are instilled with confidence and self-worth when they complete the programme. There is a great sense of pride and achievement. The students recognise the transferable skills they have learned and how completing the programme will benefit them in the future.

*- Teacher at St Joseph's Secondary School*



# Executive Summary

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Katie Booth  
Managing Director, AccessEd

I am pleased to present the Scholars Ireland programme 2020/21 impact report. The report outlines the programme partnership with Trinity College Dublin and outcomes over the 2020/21 academic year.

Our fifth programme cohort saw us deliver a programme amid the Covid-19 pandemic, working with 283 Second Year, Transition Year and Fifth Year students from 18 Dublin-area schools that are linked to Trinity Access Programmes (TAP). We recruited and trained 24 PhD Tutors that each developed a course based on their research.

We are proud that we were able to reach students in under-served communities, safely delivering the programme through an adapted online delivery model.

Students, Tutors and Teachers rose to the challenge and completed the programme despite unprecedented challenges associated with Covid-19. You can read about this in the report. To mention a few highlights:

- The programme delivery was successfully adapted to cater to schools in the wake of Covid-19;
- Students progressed across four competencies that have been shown to support access to university: university readiness, self-efficacy, motivation, and meta-cognition;
- 11 Researchers from Trinity College Dublin returned to participate in the programme;
- Tutors developed and refined their pedagogical skills through their involvement in the programme; and
- Both Tutors and Teachers endorse the programme.

We believe the programme is more important than ever in supporting students during this time, while helping to bridge the educational gap exacerbated by Covid-19.

I hope you enjoy reading the impact report. We look forward to the continued collaboration to address higher education access needs in Ireland, and to incorporate programme improvements and successful tested digital elements in future Scholars Ireland cycles.

Yours sincerely,  
Katie Booth  
Managing Director

# About Us

AccessEd is a charity that exists to increase access to university and higher education for young people from under-served backgrounds around the world.

AccessEd has a global network of partner organisations committed to this mission, sharing with them our expertise, resources and support. AccessEd also works as a capacity building and co-design partner charity collaborating with global education entrepreneurs in South Africa, Botswana, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Ireland.

We are scaling up a university access solution that grew out of the UK education system and started with The Brilliant Club.



## University Access

A university education can be transformative. Graduates have better employment prospects and earning power, better health and wellbeing, and better civic engagement.

Indeed, UNESCO aims that by 2030, all men and women will have equal access to high quality, affordable technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Despite the benefits for individuals and societies, inequalities in university access are pervasive across both the developed and developing world.

We believe that addressing this problem is both an economic imperative and a matter of social justice: all economies strive to maximise the potential of their human capital; and justice demands that any society develops engaged citizens and provides fair access to opportunity.

The Scholars Ireland programme is designed to give students an authentic experience of university. From being taught by PhD Tutors, to studying undergraduate-style topics and going on campus visits, Scholars Ireland aims to break down barriers to university.

53% of 25 to 64 year-olds have not attained a tertiary education (OECD, 2019).

Progression to higher education strongly correlates with the level of affluence in the community where a school is located.

99% of young people progress to higher education in Dublin 6, compared to only 15% in Dublin 17.

Although the absence of in-person lessons can be somewhat compensated by the use of online platforms and other technology-rich activities, access to the necessary digital devices is not equally distributed across the population. In particular, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who lack the means to access to these devices may be severely affected by the **COVID-19 crisis**, increasing learning inequalities as a result.

– Country Note: Ireland, *OECD, 2020*

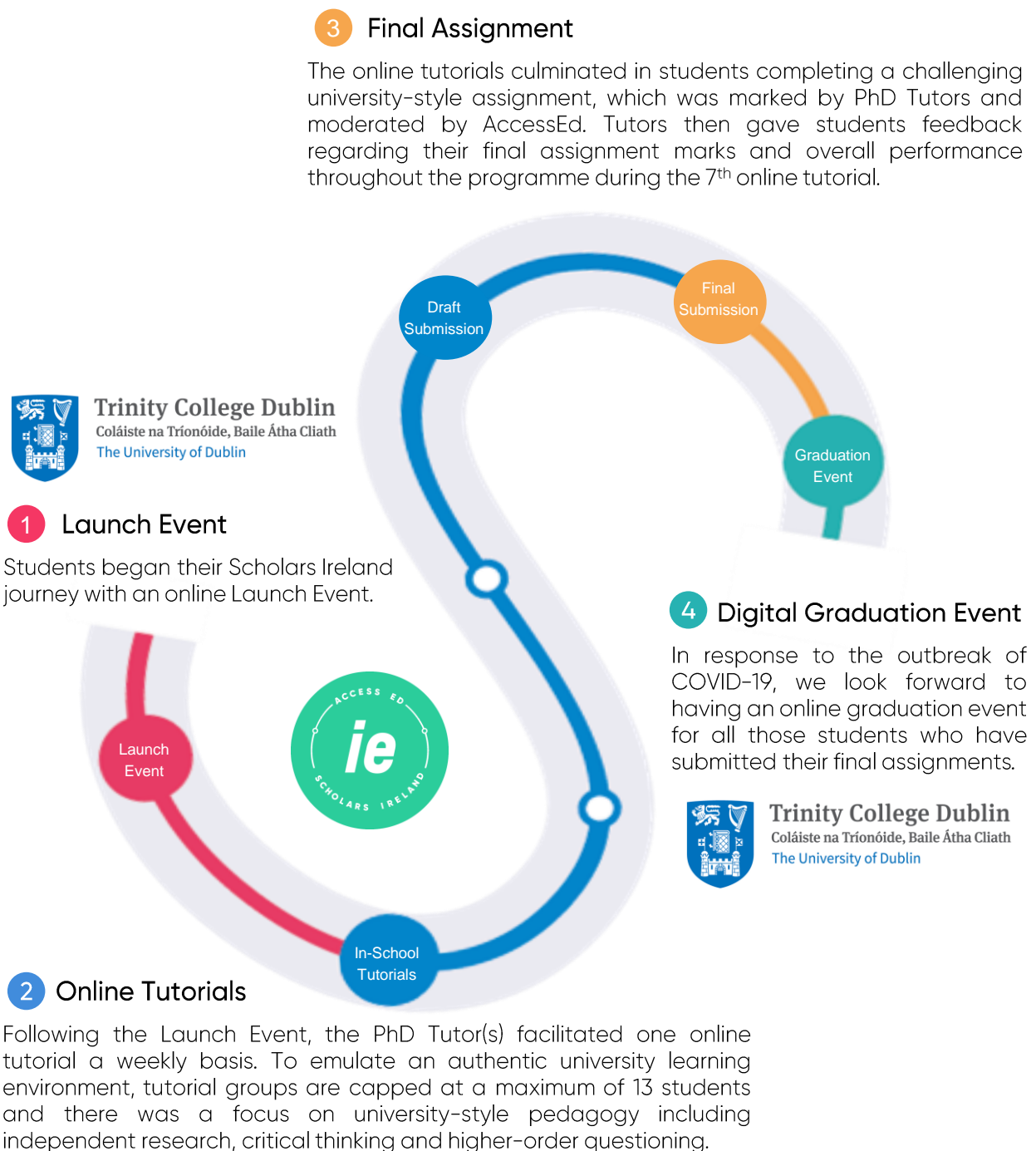
# Student Journey

The COVID-19 crisis is changing the life of millions of families around the world. Students and their families are learning to operate under a climate of uncertainty and risk-prevention, which can negatively affect students' academic motivation..

– Country Note: Ireland, *OECD, 2020*

As outlined above, students across the world are struggling with the impact that Covid-19 has had and continues to have on their education. To avoid missing out an opportunity to break down barriers to university as a result of global the pandemic, the Scholars Ireland programme was successfully adapted into an online learning experience in 2020/21.

The diagram below shows the 'student journey' through the Scholars Ireland programme.





# Online Launch Event

An online launch event took place on 21 October 2020 in order to welcome the students to the Scholars Ireland programme.



Professor Brendan Tangney, Professor of Computer Science and Statistics at Trinity College Dublin and Co-Director of Trinity Access 21, delivered a keynote address.

To ensure that the event remained interactive, students were invited into breakout rooms with student ambassadors from Trinity College Dublin that shared their experience of the Scholars Ireland programme.



# Online Graduation Event

An online graduation event took place on 10 March 2021, which celebrated students who had completed the programme by attending tutorials and submitting their final assignment.

Deirdre McAdams, former PhD Tutor and TAP ambassador, delivered a keynote address. Students had the chance to participate in an interactive quiz about Trinity College Dublin and took part in a recap of university study skills.

Students, Tutors and Teachers were invited to share their experience of the Scholars Ireland programme, sharing final assignment excerpts and their experiences on the programme.



**AccessEd**

CONGRATULATIONS to all the students and tutors graduating from the **#ScholarsIRL** programme with **@AccessTCD** today! Well done on all your amazing achievements on the Scholars Ireland programme 🎓🎉🌟📖

We're very proud of you!

**#collegeaccess #graduation #celebration**

We are grateful to Trinity College Dublin for all its help and support in making both the launch event and graduation event possible.

# Researcher Development

Every Scholars Ireland Tutor has either completed or is currently studying for a PhD.

We select Tutors who are identified as having the skills and values that we think are essential to deliver excellent academic tutorials, to be involved in the Scholars Ireland programme.

All Tutors completed an online researcher development training. The training was designed to cater for students' needs, and to make the most of Tutors' unique passion for their field of research and their academic knowledge. It addressed aspects of course design, core pedagogy (e.g. planning and questioning), classroom management, and codes of professional conduct in the school context.



66

Researchers applied to participate in the programme



11

Tutors from previous years returned to participate in the programme



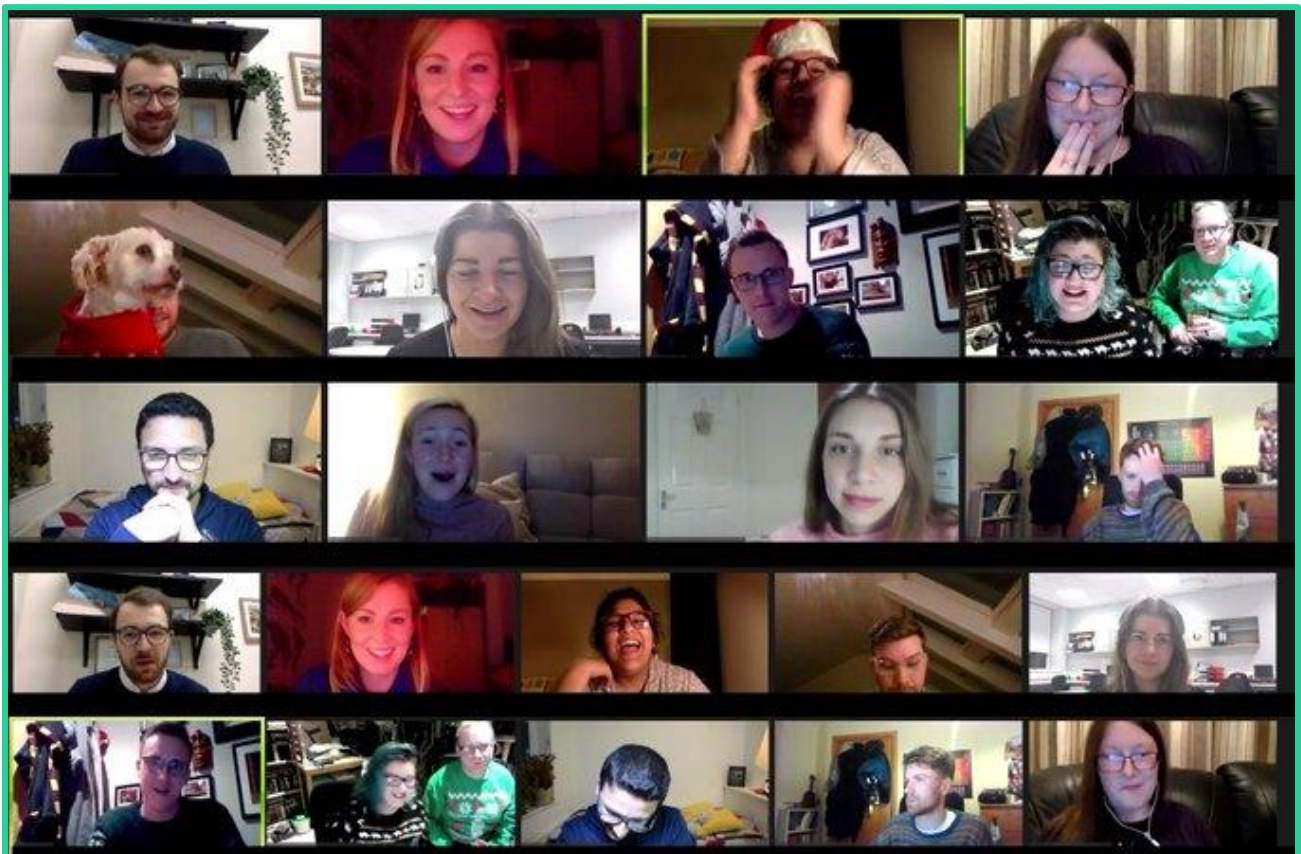
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Tutors were trained and placed to deliver university-style tutorials



6

nationalities were represented among the PhD Tutors

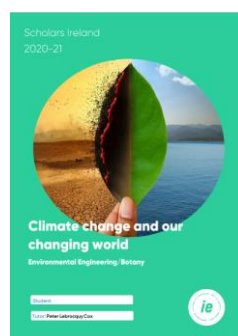


# Research-Based Outcomes

Each course was individually designed by the Tutors and based on their research. Tutors produced a classroom-ready coursebook using a well-tested template which has been carefully designed to ensure students learn effectively and engage with higher-level material.

## Course Titles and Tutors

Arts & Humanities	Aisling Durkan	Architecture: Exploring the history of our surroundings
	Beatrice Monciunskaitė	The quality of democracy in contemporary times
	Caitlin White	Using the past to understand the present: the role of history in public life
	Dawn Seymour Klos	The real housewives of Medieval England: Women, law, and the Middle Ages
	Eva Burke	Safer to be feared than loved: The reclamation of violent female agency in the domestic noir fiction of Gillian Flynn
	Jason Mariotis	All alone? Solitude, community, the self
	Lydia Blake	This is hell: Justice in Dante's Inferno
	Rebecca Carr	Watch and learn: What film teaches us about society
	Sahar Ahmed	Religion and the law: The human right to freedom of religion
	Tereza Mytakou	"He's a Boss, She is Bossy": Exploring gender stereotypes through language, literature, and culture
STEM	Alejandro Criado	Environmental detective: Investigating the environment, its risks and how to manage them
	Camille Stock	An adventure through space and (observing) time
	Clíodhna McHugh	Obesity and heart health: Understanding the connection
	James Orr	Who's eating who? How food webs can help us save the planet
	Jhonattan Baez	Flesh and blood, or not? The science behind the materials used to replace organs and tissues
	Julia Savioli	Renewable energy: Energy for the future
	Kenny Yu	Phonon, heat transfer, and extreme thermal management solutions
	Laura Kane	Cancer: When good cells go bad
	Lucy Blennerhassett	An explosive relationship: Volcanoes and climate change
	Luke Gilligan	Intelligent machines: Problem solving with machine learning
	Meabh Hughes	Radon induced-lung cancer; how geology is helping to prevent it
	Oisín Joyce	The impact of sports concussion on brain health
	Peter Cox	Climate change and our changing world
	Rebecca Fitzgerald	Antibiotics: The war on bacteria





# Introduction to Students

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Despite unprecedented challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, we supported **283 students** from **18 schools** through the Scholars Ireland programme. The programme was operated in conjunction with Dublin-area schools that are linked to TAP.



**283**

Students were selected to complete the Scholars Ireland programme



**18**

schools that are located in under-served communities in the Dublin-area



## Student Targeting

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AccessEd aims to increase the number of under-represented young people progressing to higher education. Therefore, for the Scholars Ireland programme we suggest schools select students based on under-representation factors in third-level education.

For our fourth programme year, we asked schools that at least 8 out of every 12 students registered on the programme met one or more of the following criteria:



- Parent(s)/guardian(s) did not themselves go to college;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are not in professional occupations;
- Documented disability;
- Minority ethnic group; and
- Looked After Children (in care of the state).

# Covid-19 and Online Delivery

AccessEd adopted an online delivery model in response to Covid-19.

This was the first time the programme was delivered online. In general, feedback received from both Tutors and Teachers indicate that the transition to an online delivery model was well received and highlights the flexibility of the Scholars Ireland programme model. It is recognised that many students had some fatigue with continued online learning.



The development of the programme this year to its transition online was seamless and ran very smoothly.

– Tutor at Colaiste Bride

Excellent. There were no issues at all. Even though it was done remotely, it still worked really well.

– Teacher at Loreto College

We had flexibility in setting the online programme up. This worked very well for us. We can do it again in the same way.

– Teacher at St Mark's

Remote delivery meant a massive increase in teacher commitment, as Teachers had to be present during the tutorials.

– Teacher at Blakestown Community School

Having piloted the online model, PhD Tutors and Teachers highlighted elements that they were challenged with in relation to Covid-19. Tutors and teachers dealt with new challenges of student visibility during tutorials and the wearing of masks through interactive activities.

Make sure the Students are in an environment where they can talk during the tutorials. There were two groups of Students in one place, so they can't talk... This may not be directed to the programme itself, but definitely should be looked at before the tutorials take place.

– Tutor at Moyle Park College

If a digital programme is necessary going forward, I think it would be far better for Students to be able to dial in from home when none of them have to wear masks (by the end of the programme I still didn't know what any of them looked like).

– Tutor at Firhouse Community College

Tutors and teachers reflected on the balance of in-person versus digital delivery and the potential return to some in-person programme elements:

It would have been great to be in-person to help students connect the material to the rest of their coursework.

– Tutor at St Joseph's Secondary School

I think Students have 'zoom fatigue' at times and understandably. The in-person delivery is ideal.

– Teacher at Pobalscoil Iosolde (Palmerstown)

I recommend the return of in-school tutoring as soon as allowed as the personal connection was lost, I felt.

– Teacher at Old Bawn

Given feedback obtained from PhD Tutors and Teachers, TAP and AccessEd will together be exploring the possibility of adopting a hybrid model for future cohorts, which involves in-person delivery, but maintains some online elements (e.g. tutor interviews and recruitment).

# Project Evaluation

This section gives an overview of the Scholars Ireland programme for schools involved in the programme. It includes outcomes of the programme, with data on tutorial attendance and student attainment.

Programme Overview	
Average tutorial attendance	75%
Student Attainment	
Assignments submitted	65%
Students that passed their final assignment	94%
Students that successfully graduated from the programme	174
The averages below are based on assignments submitted	
Students attaining a 1 <sup>st</sup> in their final assignment	28%
Students attaining a 2:1 in their final assignment	36%
Students attaining a 2:2 in their final assignment	24%
Students attaining a 3 <sup>rd</sup> in their final assignment	7%
Students attaining WTP in their final assignments	5%

Historically, impact reports have demonstrated that a higher percentage of students from previous cohorts submitted their final assignments. However, when interpreting the data above, it must be borne in mind that Covid-19 has had a dramatic impact student attendance and performance across the globe. This is supported by feedback received Teachers as outlined below. Against this background, the data above suggests that students were committed to the programme 2020/21 amid the global pandemic.



Student engagement waned as the programme went on and some did not complete their assignment. With all that was happening with Covid and our very limited physical space in our school, we decided to allow the students leave school early and engage from home. This started quite well, but attendance and engagement faded. On reflection, this is more related to how we approached the programme as a school this year.

- Teacher at Pobalscoil Iosolde (Palmerstown)

## Marking Note

Assignments are marked by PhD Tutors in line with mark schemes that reflect the assessment criteria for Students who are one level above. Assignments are then moderated by qualified Teachers. Assignments that do not meet passing requirements are marked as working toward pass ("WTP"). In extreme cases of plagiarism, Students will be issued a 'fail'. In these cases, Students were given the opportunity to resubmit, and were awarded a mark with a penalty for lateness.





Students that successfully graduated from the programme attended tutorials and submitted the final assignment.

# Impact Data

AccessEd is committed data-driven evaluation. Therefore, students that participated in the Scholars Ireland programme were asked to complete a pre- and post-programme self-evaluation questionnaire.

The questionnaire measured the progress students made as a result of their participation in the programme across the selection of a set of 36 questions intended to measure four competencies that have been shown to support access to university. The competencies are: university readiness, self-efficacy, motivation and meta-cognition.

The below data reflects the percentage difference in students answering that they agreed or strongly agreed with the selected statement before and after completing the Scholars Ireland programme.

	Pre-assessment	Post-assessment	Average change	Percentage change
 <b>University Readiness</b> The knowledge Students have around higher education and how they can access it	4.74/7	5.15/7	+ 0.41	+ 5.9%
 <b>Self-Efficacy</b> The belief that Students can achieve future goals	5.28/7	5.31/7	+ 0.03	+ 0.5%
 <b>Motivation</b> The factors that drive Students to behave in a particular way	5.15/7	5.27/7	+ 0.12	+ 1.7%
 <b>Meta-Cognition</b> The ability to think explicitly about one's own learning	5.12/7	5.22/7	+ 0.10	+ 1.4%

## Interpretation notes

The competencies are assessed using a standardised self-report questionnaire from the academic literature called 'The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire'. It is a highly reliable and valid assessment for university readiness, self-efficacy, motivation and meta-cognition.

The numeric shifts on standardized Likert scales for pre- and post-assessments can often be small (e.g. less than 1.0). This is typical for these types of tests, and in many instances small numeric differences are statistically significant suggesting that there is a real difference in performance between the pre- and post-assessments.

Due to the post-Christmas lockdown and students feeling overwhelmed, we only had a 50% assignment completion. This is not a true reflection on how effective the programme was. It was one of our best learning years yet. Thank you so much for everything.

– Teacher at Balinteer Community College

Previous impact reports have shown that students that participated in the programme in previous cohorts have made more progress in the abovementioned competencies, especially self-efficacy, motivation and meta-cognition. However, as mentioned, it must be recognised that the Scholars Ireland programme 2020/21 took place in the wake of Covid-19. This is supported by feedback received by Teachers speaking about the learning experience.



# Impact Data

## Continued

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### University Readiness

The knowledge students have around higher education and how they can access it

I have a good level of knowledge in the subject that my Scholars Ireland programme course focuses on.



I think I can complete written work to the same standard as students in the year above me at school.



I would feel confident talking to someone who works at a university about what I have studied and what I know.



I understand why and how people study when they are at university.



I know the steps I need to take to apply to university in the future.



I am likely to apply to university/college.



### Motivation

The factors that drive students to behave in a particular way

I am often able to use what I learn in one class in other classes.



I like what I am learning in my lessons.



It is important for me to learn what is being taught in my lessons.



I prefer schoolwork that is challenging so I can learn new things.



# Impact Data

## Continued

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### Self-Efficacy

The belief that students can achieve future goals

I expect to do very well in my school overall.



I think I will receive good grades in my classes this year.



I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned in my lessons.



I think my study skills are excellent compared with other students in my classes.



### Meta-Cognition

The ability to think explicitly about one's own learning

When I study, I use what I have learned from old homework tasks and the textbook to do new tasks.



I ask myself questions to make sure I understand the materials I have been studying.



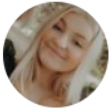
When I study, I try to put together the information I learn in class and from books.



When I study at home, I try to remember what the Teacher said in class to help me answer the questions correctly.



# Student Feedback



Alex ♥



So grateful for the opportunity to share my experience at the scholars ireland virtual graduation! Thank you so much to Mr.Kennedy for the opportunity ♥

#scholarsirl @Colaistebride @AccessTCD

## My Tutor was...



...great. I would recommend 10/10. He's very nice and also encourages me to do better at my work which I think is good in a Tutor. When he points things that I did wrong I don't feel bad and I want to work harder on the next assignment because of it.

- Student at Westland Row CBS

...incredibly helpful when we were in need of strengthening our knowledge. His guidance in our assignments regarding the comments and feedback is greatly appreciated. Very informative but made all of the points understandable for the students.

- Student at Balbriggan Community College



## Tell us what you enjoyed most of the Scholars Ireland programme?



I enjoyed gaining insight into third level education, especially learning the assignment structure and techniques such as citations. I believe this will really help going forward in my education.

- Student at Colaiste Bride

I enjoyed being able to voice opinions, question everything and debate on subjects. It was actually more fun than I expected. I thought it would be similar to lectures rather than fun debates.

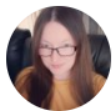
- Student at Ardscoil La Salle



I enjoyed learning about a completely different subject that I probably would of never got the chance to learn about if I didn't do the programme.

- Student at Balbriggan Community College

# Tutor Feedback



**Eva Burke**



Congratulations to all of today's [#ScholarsIRL](#) graduates, especially the students from Colaiste Bride, who have been such a joy to work with. And mega thanks to [@PKTeaches](#) for going above and beyond in this hell year to ensure that Oisin and I were welcomed with open arms!

## Data Snapshot

The data below offers a snapshot of the tutor post-programme questionnaire.



This whole experience has been immensely enjoyable and valuable... Seeing the students engaging with a course I designed from scratch was a very affirming experience, and really allowed me to engage with my work in a novel way.

- Tutor at Westland Row CBS

Taking my own research and being able to adapt it into a short course for teenage students was very helpful going forward when writing articles. Their completion of the assignment gave them reassurance that they were very capable of continuing into third level education, and that was personally very rewarding.

- Tutor at Westland Row CBS



# Teacher Feedback



**Philip Kennedy**

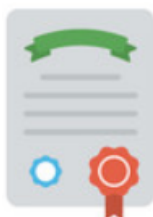


THEY DID IT! @Colaistebride #ScholarsIRL



## Data Snapshot

The data below offers a snapshot of the teacher post-programme questionnaire.



100%

of Lead Teachers agreed with the statement that students gained an understanding of why and how people study when are at university

83%

of Lead Teachers strongly agreed with the statement that Scholars Ireland was well co-ordinated by AccessEd and TAP

92%

of Lead Teachers strongly agreed with the statement that they would be keen to run the programme again at their school

92%

of Lead Teachers agreed with the statement that students are more confident about applying to university after their participation in the programme

83%

of Lead Teachers strongly agreed with the statement that communications from AccessEd and TAP were informative and clear

75%

of Lead Teachers agreed with the statement that students are more engaged in their tutorial subject areas after their participation in the programme

92%

of Lead Teachers agreed with the statement that students enjoyed the Scholars Ireland experience



It does so much more than just academia. It builds on future skills and resilience. The mentoring element is really good with the right connection which we very much got this year.

- Teacher at Balinteer Community College

This year it went really well, and the cohort of our students REALLY loved the topic they were studying... They gained valuable skills such as essay writing, redrafting, citing and structure.

- Teacher at Loreto College

I would highly recommend the Scholars Ireland programme. It is engaging, develops key skills, and promotes college awareness, independent learning and accountability.

- Teacher at Balbriggan Community School

The students really enjoyed and benefitted from the Scholars Ireland programme. It absolutely gave them a flavour of what to expect at third level.

- Teacher at Old Bawn

# Teacher and School Feedback



## Tallaght Community School

...

A great morning for our T.Y. students who graduated from Scholars Ireland, Trinity College. Our students have worked hard and shown resilience over the last few months. We are so proud of you! [#ScholarsIRL](#) [@AccessTCD](#)



## Loreto Crumlin

...

BIG congratulations to our 2nd yr students who graduated from the Scholars of Ireland programme yesterday. We are extremely proud of all your hard work over recent months. Well done Amealia & Lisa, who spoke before 200 teachers & students at the ceremony. [@accesstcd](#) [#ScholarsIRL](#)



## OldBawnCommunitySch

...

Congratulations to our TY who successfully completed the [@TrinityAccess](#) Scholars Ireland programme. Throughout this programme they were mentored by a TCD PHD student & had to produce a 3rd Level standard assignment at the end. Well done to all of them 😊  
[@\\_AccessEd](#) [#ScholarsIRL](#)



## Coláiste Bríde D22

...

Replying to [@alexxdonohoe](#) and [@AccessTCD](#)  
Well done Alex on showing your leadership and passion for [#Scholarsirl](#) programme, that we in CB are so fortunate to participate in. We hope that one day you too might become a tutor giving back! 🙌🙌🙌 [#proudfyou](#)



## Ms. Ronan

...

Well done Alex. Delighted you have found [#scholarsirl](#) so beneficial. You should be really proud of using your [#studentvoice](#) to share your experience today. Thanks [@AccessTCD](#) for the opportunity for students [@Colaistebride](#) and for facilitating the student graduation today. 🙌



## Philip Kennedy

...

Big thanks to [#ScholarsIRL](#) for organising a great virtual graduation ceremony! Very proud of our 5th years Alex and Ashlyn for speaking so well about their experience of working with their amazing tutors Oisín and [@Eva\\_B89](#) [@AccessTCD](#) [@Colaistebride](#) 😊 Congrats to all schools.

# Student-Tutor Case Study

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## Student

Patrycja

## Age

16 years old

## Grade and School

Transition year at Tallaght  
Community School

## Tutor

Lydia Blake

## Course

This is hell: Justice in Dante's  
Inferno

## From the student's perspective:

### How did you feel about taking part in a Scholars Ireland programme?

After hearing that I was assigned to the Scholars Ireland programme I was excited to see what kind of topic I would be learning about with my group. I was pleasantly surprised to see that the topic was about Dante Alighieri an Italian poet, writer and philosopher from the 13th century. At first, I was skeptical about the topic of the course because I wasn't someone who enjoyed poetry or understood it very well, but after the first lesson I was astonished about how interesting the topic actually was.

### What was your favourite part of the course?

My favourite part of the course was learning about Dante Alighieri's world-famous poem *The Divine Comedy*, I was amused by how detailed and complex the poem itself was. After we dived further into understanding the poem and its hidden meanings, I could not get my head out of the topic, I was so fascinated by how someone from the 13th century could write such a significant piece of literature that is still relevant till this day and inspired millions of people worldwide.

### Did you enjoy learning from a university Tutor?

My favourite part of the course was learning about Dante Alighieri's world-famous poem *The Divine Comedy*, I was amused by how detailed and complex the poem itself was. After we dived further into understanding the poem and its hidden meanings, I could not get my head out of the topic, I was so fascinated by how someone from the 13th century could write such a significant piece of literature that is still relevant till this day and inspired millions of people worldwide.

### How did taking part in your tutorials help you build your skills?

Before taking part in Scholars Ireland, I considered myself satisfactory at literacy, as time went on and my group was near the end of learning about Dante Alighieri, we were preparing to complete the final assignment of our course which was to write a university level essay around our topic. At the time nobody in my group had ever written anything that was considered to be at university level, as a result all of us were quite skeptical on how we would approach the task including myself. Luckily my Tutor, Lydia, kept giving us tips and...

# Student-Tutor Case Study

## Continued

---

### **How did taking part in your tutorials help you build your skills? – Continued**

...advice on how to gather all the information that we had learned over the weeks that we had been taking part in the programme and how to turn that information into a piece of literature that we would be proud to present as our final project. Thanks to the help and experience of my Tutor I can proudly say that my literacy skills have become of higher quality.

### **Did the tutorials help, motivate or encourage you in any other way?**

After taking part in the Scholars Ireland programme I was more encouraged to explore topics and subjects that I would not usually choose. At the start of the course, I was skeptical about the topic chosen for my group, I have never been someone who enjoyed studying poetry and the meanings in the poem, it always seemed dull and uneventful. However, after completing the first lesson of the course I was astonished how thrilling the topic actually was, thenceforth I was always eagerly anticipating the next time we had our lessons.

### **How has the Scholars Ireland programme helped you decide or prepare for what you want to do next?**

Participating in the Scholars Ireland programme has helped me to understand how high the expectations are in university and what kind of work is allowable. After seeing the amount of work and skills the students must go through to produce university level projects, I realized that I would have to work more diligently during the next two years leading to my Leaving Certificate to qualify for a high-ranking university.

### **From the Tutor's perspective:**

#### **How would you summarise this particular student's learning journey with you?**

Patrycja's learning journey was one of growth and engagement. It was a joy to see her work progress over the lectures. From the very beginning, the work she produced was of a high standard. Therefore, I was eager for her to find her academic voice and hone in on certain elements which are expected within in a university level essay. Her final essay exceeded my expectations. Patrycja was a delight to teach.

#### **What was a highlight of having them in your group?**

The highlight of having Patrycja in my group was her willingness to learn and her engagement with Dante and the texts. Patrycja has this ability to take a question and make it her own. Each week, I would look forward to reading her work.

#### **How do you hope your course will have benefited them?**

I hope that Patrycja will have gained a fascinating insight into the world of Dante and University. I hope this course has equipped her with certain skills, such as researching, structuring an essay and analyzing texts that will not only help her when she progresses to university, but will also help her in her leaving cert. I also hope that this course, has opened her up to a world of possibilities.



# Student-Tutor Case Study

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## Student

Conor

## Age

13 years old

## Grade and School

2<sup>nd</sup> year at Blakestown  
Community School

## Tutor

Meabh Huges

## Course

Radon induced-lung cancer;  
how geology is helping to  
prevent it

## From the student's perspective:

### How did you feel about taking part in a Scholars Ireland programme?

I enjoyed taking part in the scholars programme, however it was a little bit intimidating and I was nervous that it would be difficult.

### What was your favourite part of the course?

Learning in depth about a subject that I might only scratch the surface on in my regular classes.

### Did you enjoy learning from a university Tutor?

Yes, it was a different way of learning that I enjoyed.

### How did taking part in your tutorials help you build your skills?

It helped build my confidence, independent work, critical thinking and group work.

### Did the tutorials help, motivate or encourage you in any other way?

It encouraged me to try harder on homework in other subjects, and also motivated me to look at schoolwork in a different way.

### How has the Scholars Ireland programme helped you decide or prepare for what you want to do next?

It helped me decide that I am more likely to go to university and study at a PhD level.

## From the Tutor's perspective:

### How would you summarise this particular student's learning journey with you?

This student was top of the class and always engaging and taking part. Very proactive student!

### What was a highlight of having them in your group?

The interaction was the highlight, knowing that students were paying attention and actively learning.

### How do you hope your course will have benefited them?

I hope they will have more confidence to pursue their goals in life.

# Student-Tutor Case Study

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## Student

Katie

## Age

16 years old

## Grade and School

5<sup>th</sup> year at Colaiste Bride

## Tutor

Oisín Joyce

## Course

The impact of sports concussion on brain health

## From the student's perspective:

### How did you feel about taking part in a Scholars Ireland programme?

I loved having the opportunity to take part in the Scholars Ireland programme, as I had heard so many positive things about it from my friends who had previously taken part. It sounded like something I would really enjoy and benefit from. I was also very excited to take part, as it would be a new challenge for me. The topic that the course covered was something that interested me, and I could relate to, as I play sport and I have also thought about pursuing a career in it.

### What was your favourite part of the course?

My favourite part of the course was when we learned about the impact of concussion, specifically in sport, as well as the effects that multiple concussions can have on a person later in life. I thoroughly enjoyed doing further research on this topic for my homework task and final assignment. I found this whole topic to be extremely fascinating, as it is not spoken about enough. This topic was also my favourite as I have suffered a concussion playing basketball in the past and I felt it gave me greater insight into the seriousness of a concussion and its effects.

### Did you enjoy learning from a university Tutor?

Yes, I really enjoyed learning from a university Tutor, as it gave me an insight into what classes would be like when I hopefully go to college myself.

### How did taking part in your tutorials help you build your skills?

Taking part in the tutorials helped build my skills in a number of different areas, such as time management. We were set a homework assignment each week with a deadline, therefore I had to use my time management skills to ensure my work was handed in on time. I also had to use researching skills for my assignments, as I had to find the best websites with relevant and factual information in relation to my homework to achieve the best grade I could. Another skill that I used was editing skills. After I found a website with the information needed, I had to put that information into my own words, so I didn't get penalized for plagiarism.

# Student-Tutor Case Study

## Continued

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### **Did the tutorials help, motivate or encourage you in any other way?**

Yes, the tutorials showed me how much I will enjoy college. Therefore, I was motivated to maintain my grades in school so I can go on to study my preferred course in college. The tutorials also encouraged me to look further into studying neuroscience in the future, as after completing the course I believe this is an area I could study in college. The tutorials also helped me as they gave me a real insight into what college experience, and it gave me confidence to believe that I am capable of furthering my education at third level.

### **How has the Scholars Ireland programme helped you decide or prepare for what you want to do next?**

The Scholars Programme has helped me realise that college is definitely the path that I want to take after I finish my Leaving Certificate. This subject was not something I had considered studying prior to this programme but now it is definitely something I would like to study.

### **From the Tutor's perspective:**

#### **How would you summarise this particular student's learning journey with you?**

Given the new online learning environment amidst the pandemic, our learning journey as both Tutor and student was initially slow to progress. But as the programme progressed, the week's transpired and the homework assignments started rolling in from Katie it was evident that her attention to the material in class and timely submission of assignments showed to me that she was grasping the material very well and keen to learn. Each week she would ask enlightened questions based on her research that would spark several discussions in class and amongst her peers. Katie exceeded my expectations of what to anticipate with the programme now moving to an online platform, and her adaptability to these changes will only benefit her in her future academic and professional career.

#### **What was a highlight of having them in your group?**

It was amazing to see the use of scientific language and terminology that Katie employed consistently throughout her homework and final assignment. She displayed a keen and in depth understanding of a difficult and novel subject matter at a young age that was a privilege to be a witness to. Katie's portrayal of the material from the weekly tutorials was truly excellent, from her depictions of the brain regions and their associated functions to her detailed descriptions and comparative analysis of the later in life consequences of repetitive head impacts.

#### **How do you hope your course will have benefited them?**

Katie has taken on board the comments and feedback that I provided her with week on week. I hope that she benefited from this as I felt that she expressed this in each of her weekly homework submissions whereby her essay structure and format was clear and seamlessly transitioned between talking points. She employed many illustrations in her assignments to help guide the reader and better answer the questions posed to her which I hope will be of benefit to her in future assignments. I am hopeful that overall her engagement and participation in the course has given her a glimpse into third-level education and the many avenues that can be taken amongst such broad subject areas such as STEM.

# Final Assignment Excerpt

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## The impact of sports concussion on brain health:

### What happens to the brain when a person suffers one or more concussions?

Such a common and well-known head injury known as the concussion must have a lot of research since it impacts a great amount of people, right? A concussion can show itself in many ways after impact, these signs and symptoms stemming from pre-determined factors such as biological sex and age difference, many of the problems even arise from each individual. One may have instantaneous signs and symptoms by physically collapsing and vomiting while the other might have disorientation and visible confusion that will slowly present itself. Overcoming a concussion can be a tough process as you cannot rush it, physically, mentally, and emotionally. If a being does so, it will only lead to more long-lasting complications in the future.

Even with the awareness of the many signs and symptoms of a concussion, now we need to know how to tackle the healing process of the concussion. The main point to follow is a slow and steady course, casually easing yourself into more physical and mental activities later in the slope, as even events that you may think do not require a lot of energy can further delay the re-development of cognitive function. Due to the brain being split up into distinctive sectors, all playing vital roles in a being, they will have diverse and unique reactions, leading to a domino effect as they play various roles but heavily overlap.

But, can one's life change later after suffering multiple concussions? That is where Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) comes in. CTE is a neurodegenerative disease which causes severe and irreparable brain damage, because of repeated head injuries. Symptoms do not present themselves until years after the injuries and can include behavioural problems, mood problems and dilemmas with thinking. Anyone can suffer from a concussion differently and may not be capable to recognise the signs and symptoms as they heavily intersect with other diseases and condition. In the end we should not fear concussions, however, we should be educated on the identification and how to treat them before receiving official medical care and there would be less people and athletes who would suffer from many untreated concussions which could lead to neurological degenerative diseases such as CTE.



#### Student

Milania

#### Grade and School

5<sup>th</sup> year at Colaiste  
Bride

#### Tutor

Oisín Joyce

#### Course

The impact of sports  
concussion on brain  
health



Grade  
= 1st



# Final Assignment Excerpt

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**Student**

Ina

**Grade and School**

Transition year at  
Tallaght Community  
School

**Tutor**

Lydia Blake

**Course**

This is hell: Justice in  
Dante's Inferno

***"Justice in the life of the wicked".***

Describe and explain Dante's form of justice as depicted in the Inferno.

We can see Contrapasso throughout the Inferno. For example, in canto nineteen Dante visits circle eight. The sign represented here is fraud. Circle eight is split into ten ditches. Each ditch contains their own type of fraud and a different punishment for each. I will focus on simony for this paragraph.

Simony means the buying and selling of religious items such as church positions, indulgences and pardons. Dante sees this as a severe sin and therefore their punishment is to be trapped upside down with only their feet and legs being visible and their feet were set on fire. Dante feels they are justly punished and shows no remorse as he believes that the people here, who are mainly priests, have gone against Jesus' teachings. This circle highlights how corrupt the church was at the time. This was also a very brave thing for Dante to do at the time as the church had a lot of power over the everyday lives of people in the Middle Ages. Dante went as far as to insinuate that Pope Boniface VIII would be next to join the sinners in this circle. This went against everything that Dante believed in because a Pope is seen as God's representative on Earth and then to not only speak out against them but also to say that they had committed an immoral act against God was unheard of.



**Grade**  
**= 1st**

# Join us

## Partnership & Support

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### Building our Programme: Next Academic Year

The Scholars Ireland programme was launched in 2018 in collaboration with the TAP at Trinity College Dublin.

After the success of our first 5 cohorts in collaboration with our founding partner Trinity College Dublin, we are working toward adopting a social franchising model in order to scale up the programmes and work with additional higher education institutions in the upcoming academic year. Working with additional higher education partners will enable us to reproduce the success achieved during the past 3 years and reach increasing numbers of students in high-need and under-served areas of Ireland.

In order to achieve the above, we are working toward:

- Exploring additional university partnerships to become part of the global AccessEd and Scholars programme network; and
- Exploring additional corporate, charity and organisation partnerships.

### Become a Partner or Sponsor

Our partners make our work possible and help us create real impact for young people on their educational journeys.

We are looking for university, corporate, charity and organisation partners to reach more young people from 2021 onwards. The benefits for your organisation supporting the Scholars Ireland programme are:

- Opportunities to explore how we can further target strategic support that aligns with your outreach or Access agenda, particularly in the wake of Covid-19;
- Ability to work with other higher education partners in Ireland to multiple impact, create economies of scale in support for young people and foster new connections
- Opportunities to work with us on shaping the programme in its contribution to education outcomes across the Republic of Ireland; and
- Diverse ways to support a whole or part programme to keep it accessible to local schools.

### Get in touch

For more information and to discuss opportunities for partnership or running Scholars Ireland at your higher education institution please contact [hello@access-ed.ngo](mailto:hello@access-ed.ngo).



I enjoyed how I learnt more about a specific topic I would not have considered as a choice of study, which has opened new possibilities to future interest. I have also enjoyed the fact that the course itself is very different to how school would educate me on subjects where I can focus on this specific topic and not just absorb multiple topics all in around a year or so.

– Student at Mercy Secondary School

# Appendix:

## List of Schools, Tutors and Courses

School	Tutor	Field	Course Title
Ardscoil La Salle	James Orr	STEM	Who's eating who? How food webs can help us save the planet
Balbriggan Community School	Julia Savioli	STEM	Renewable energy: Energy for the future
Balbriggan Community School	Camille Stock	STEM	An adventure through space and (observing) time
Balinteer Community College	Jason Mariotis	Arts & Humanities	All alone? Solitude, community, the self
Blakestown Community College	Meabh Hughes	STEM	Radon induced-lung cancer; how geology is helping to prevent it
Colaiste Bride	Eva Burke	Arts & Humanities	Safer to be feared than loved: The reclamation of violent female agency in the domestic noir fiction of Gillian Flynn
Colaiste Bride	Oisín Joyce	STEM	The impact of sports concussion on brain health
Drimnagh Castle Secondary School	Alejandro Criado	STEM	Environmental detective: Investigating the environment, its risks and how to manage them
Firhouse Community College	Caitlin White	Arts & Humanities	Using the past to understand the present: the role of history in public life
Loreto College	Aisling Durkan	Arts & Humanities	Architecture: Exploring the history of our surroundings
Marian College	Peter Cox	STEM	Climate change and our changing world
Mercy Secondary School	Sahar Ahmed	Arts & Humanities	Religion and the law: The human right to freedom of religion
Moyle Park College	Tereza Mytakou	Arts & Humanities	"He's a Boss, She is Bossy": Exploring gender stereotypes through language, literature, and culture
Moyle Park College	Kenny Yu	STEM	Phonon, heat transfer, and extreme thermal management solutions
Old Bawn	Clíodhna McHugh	STEM	Obesity and heart health: Understanding the connection
Old Lady of Mercy Secondary School	Lucy Blennerhassett	STEM	An explosive relationship: Volcanoes and climate change
Pobalscoil Iosolde (Palmerstown)	Dawn Seymour Klos	Arts & Humanities	The real housewives of Medieval England: Women, law, and the Middle Ages
Pobalscoil Iosolde (Palmerstown)	Laura Kane	STEM	Cancer: When good cells go bad
St Joseph's Secondary School	Rebecca Carr	Arts & Humanities	Watch and learn: What film teaches us about society
St Joseph's Secondary School	Beatrice Monciunskaitė	Arts & Humanities	The quality of democracy in contemporary times
St Mark's	Jhonattan Baez	STEM	Flesh and blood, or not? The science behind the materials used to replace organs and tissues
Tallaght Community School	Lydia Blake	Arts & Humanities	This is hell: Justice in Dante's Inferno
Tallaght Community School	Rebecca Fitzgerald	STEM	Antibiotics: The war on bacteria
Westland Row CBS	Luke Gilligan	STEM	Intelligent machines: Problem solving with machine learning



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