



# Senior Cycle Redevelopment: Additional Assessment Components and Other Key Issues Highlighted by Teachers.

March 2026

JOB Ref: 8394-2025/CM



# 1

## Methodology and Principal Findings



# Research Objectives And Methodology



## Why?

The research objective was to obtain subject teachers' views on Senior Cycle Redevelopment with a focus on Tranche 1 subjects.

## How Many?

1,591 ASTI members out of a sample of circa 13,500 took part in the survey. This represents a good response rate of 12%.

## Who?

The participants include 339 teachers of Tranche 1 subjects, 1,067 teachers of AAC subjects, 37 principals and 46 deputy principals some of whom also had subject responsibility.

## When?

Fieldwork was conducted in February 2026.

## How?

The survey instrument was an online questionnaire sent by RED C to circa 13,500 ASTI members on email database.

# Principal Findings



## 1. Additional Assessment Components (AACs)

In the Tranche 1 subjects of Biology, Business, Chemistry and Physics, the overwhelming majority of teachers are dissatisfied with the allocation of 40% of marks to the Additional Assessment Component (AAC). The majority of teachers propose a mark of 20% or lower.

## 2. Workload Pressures

Teachers report a growing mismatch between curriculum expectations and the time and resources available to deliver them.

## 3. Artificial Intelligence and Assessment Integrity

An overwhelming majority of teachers expect to have difficulties authenticating that the work submitted has been completed solely by the students.

## 4. Laboratory Safety and Resources

Many schools lack the laboratory infrastructure, equipment and technician support required to safely implement laboratory-based investigative AAC work.

## 5. Retention of teachers

A total of 69% of teachers reported that they have considered leaving the profession.

## 6. Stress on Students and Teachers

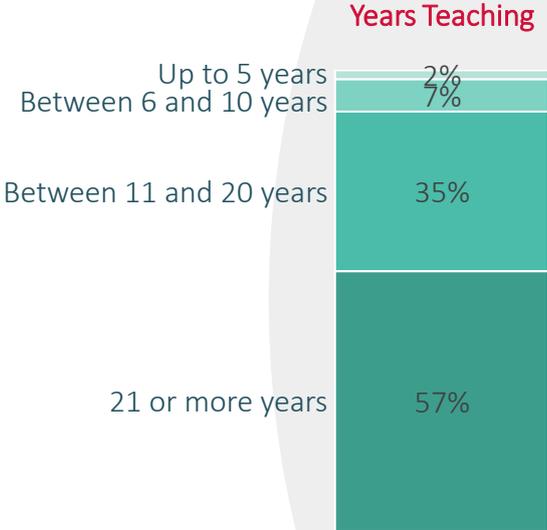
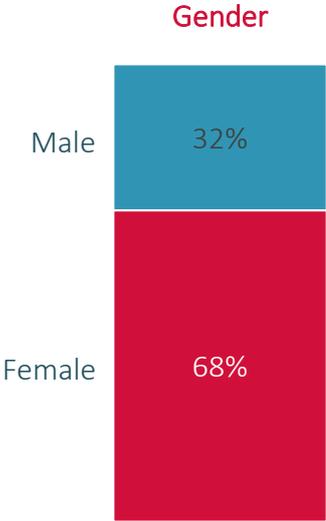
The cumulative impact of reform, workload and assessment changes is placing both teacher wellbeing and student wellbeing under increasing strain.

# 2

## Profile of Survey Respondents



# Profile Of Respondents

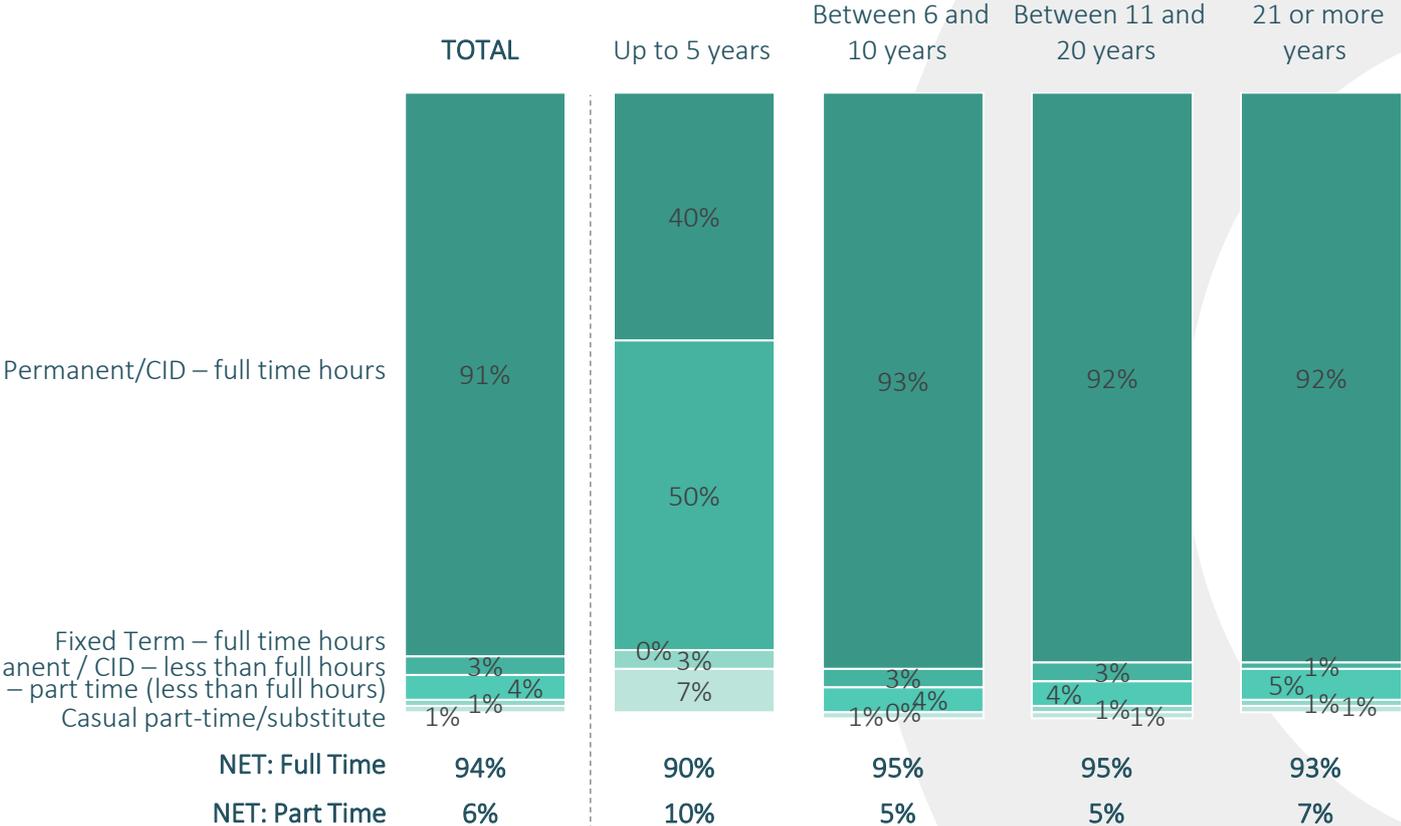


Q. Please select your gender

Q. How many years are you teaching?

(Base: All Respondents)

# Employment Status

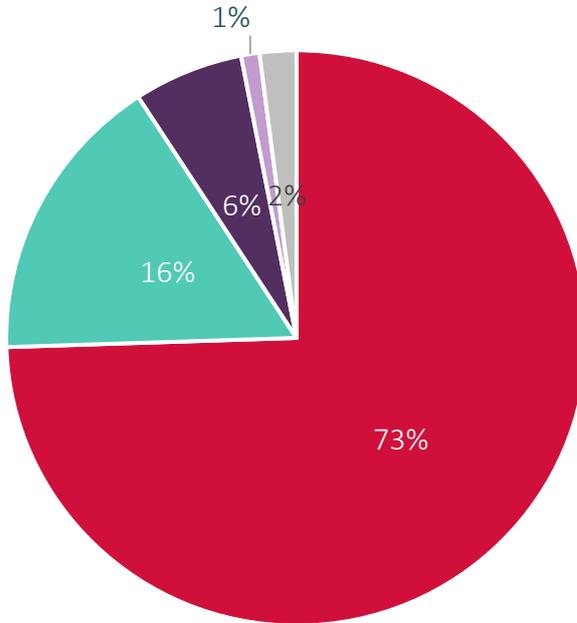


Q. What is your employment status?  
(Base: All Respondents)

NOTE: Scores may not add exactly to 100% due to rounding

\* = < 0.5%

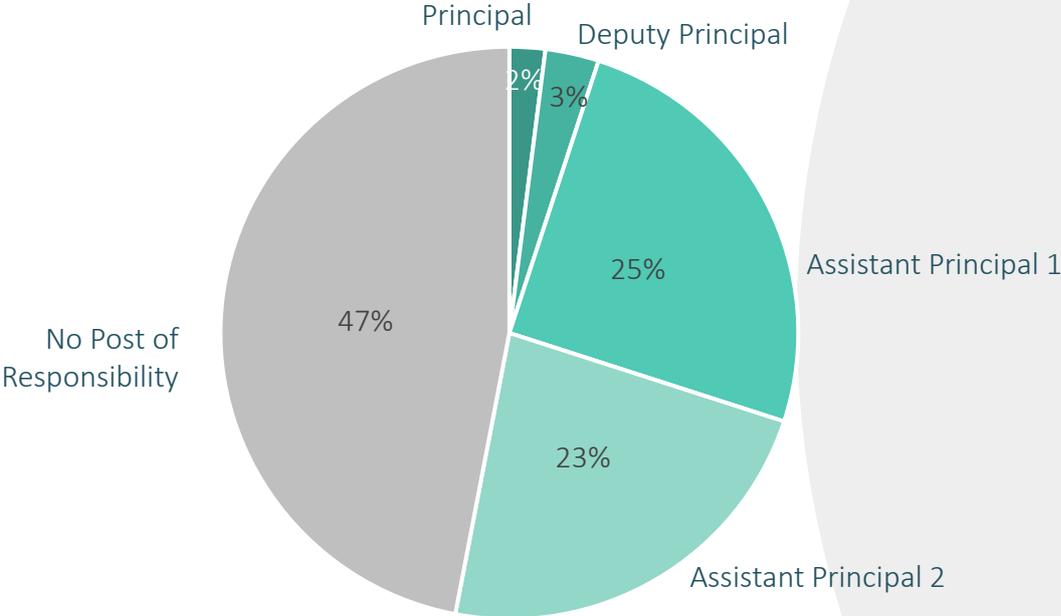
# Type Of School



- Voluntary Secondary School
- Community / Comprehensive School
- Community College / ETB school
- Educate Together
- Some other type

Q. What type of school do you teach in?  
(Base: All Respondents)

# Post Of Responsibility



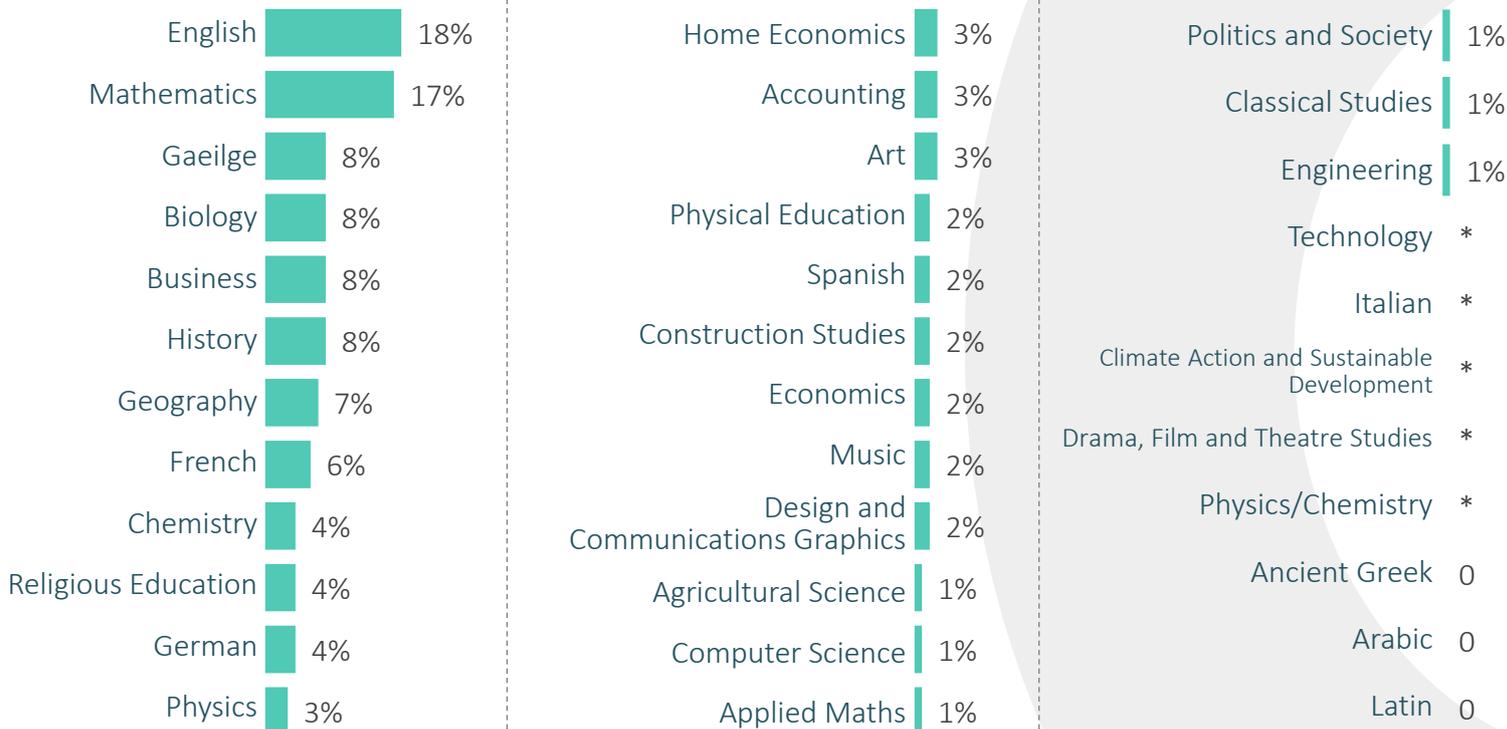
NOTE: Scores may not add exactly to 100% due to rounding

Q. Do you have a Post of Responsibility as follows?  
(Base: All Respondents)

# Subjects Taught



Respondents were most likely to be teaching English or Mathematics, though Gaeilge, Biology, History and Business are taught by around one in twelve.



Q. Which of these Leaving Certificate subjects are you currently teaching? Please select all that apply.

(Base: All Respondents)

\* = <0.5%

# 3

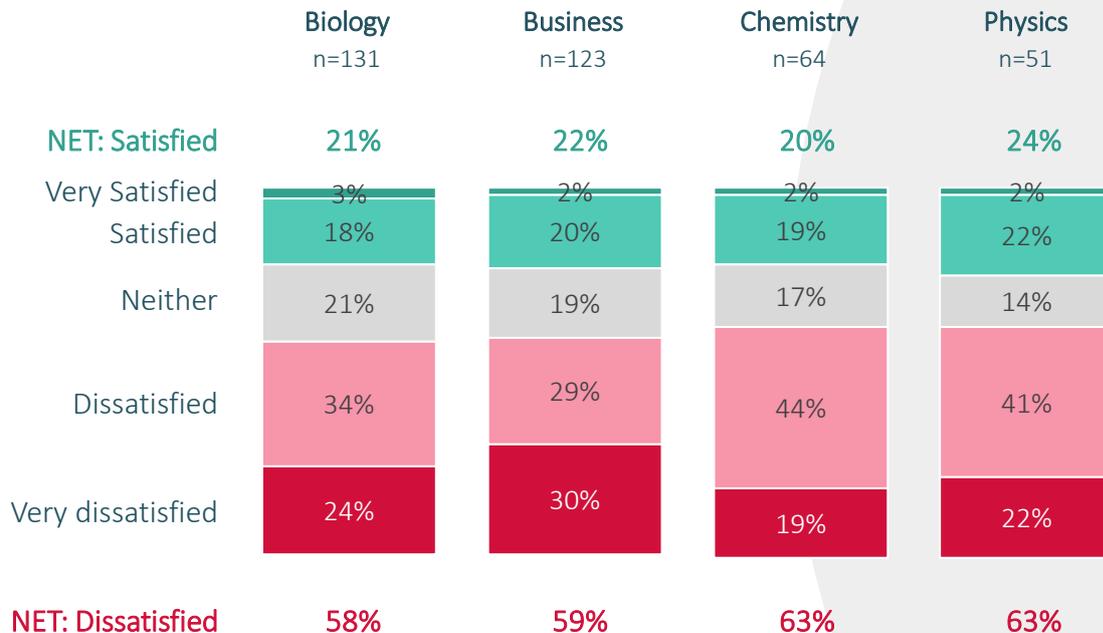
## Satisfaction With Curriculum Specification



# Satisfaction With The New Curriculum Specification (Syllabus) For Tranche 1 Subjects



High levels of dissatisfaction evident for the four main Tranche 1 subjects



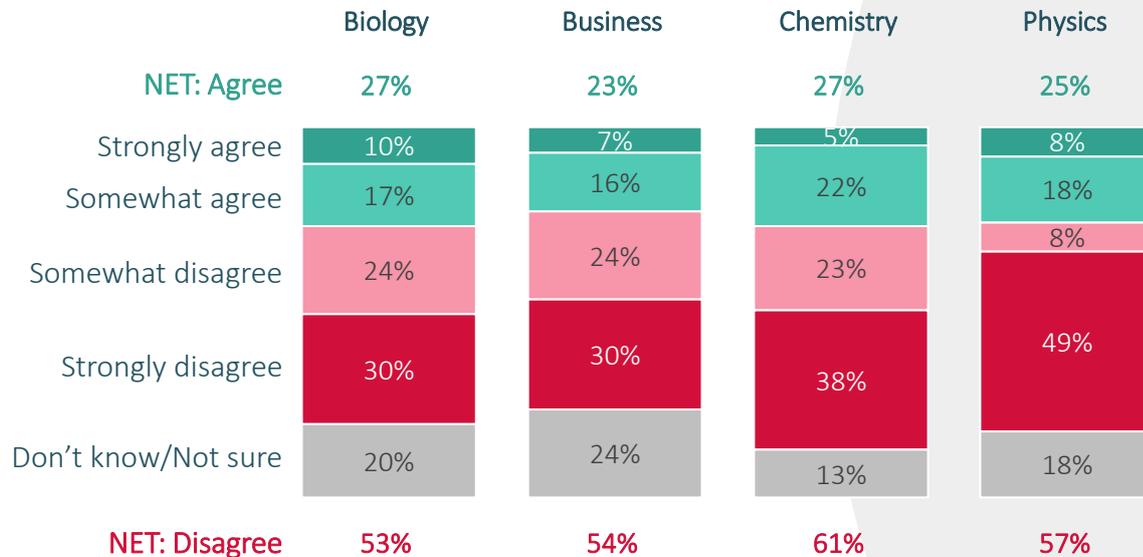
Q. For each of the subjects you teach for Leaving Certificate listed below, please indicate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the curriculum specification (syllabus)  
(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

\* = < 0.5%

# Extent To Which Submissions Made By Teachers To The NCCA Are Reflected In The Syllabus



Low levels of agreement that submissions made by teachers to the NCCA about the following subjects taught are reflected in the syllabus



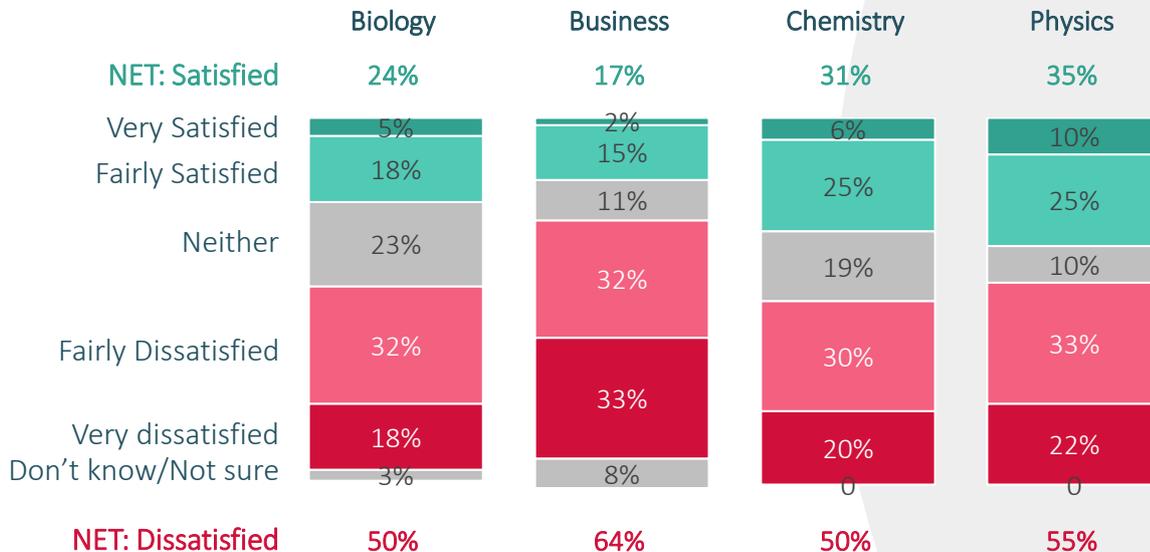
Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the submissions made by teachers to the NCCA about each the following subjects that you teach are reflected in the published curriculum specification (syllabus)?

(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

# Level of Satisfaction With The Quality of Sample Examination Papers Published By The State Exams Commission (SEC)



Satisfaction with the quality of sample examination papers published by the SEC is generally low across Tranche 1 subjects, and notably for Business



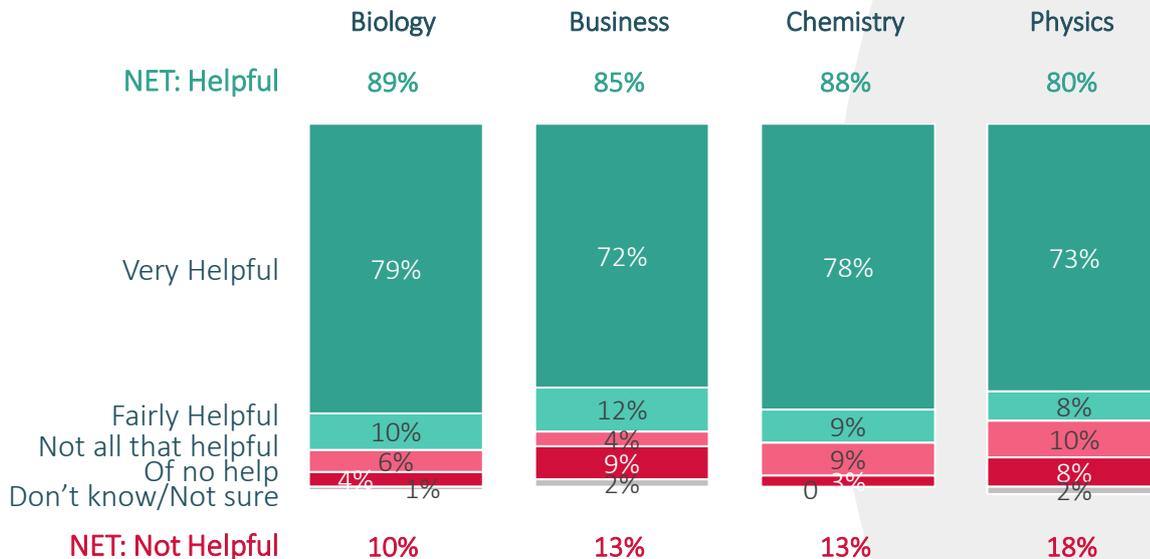
Q. To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of the sample examination papers published by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) for each of the following subjects that you teach?

(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

# Would a Marking Scheme Be Helpful?



Majority believe it would have been very helpful to have been supplied with a marking scheme

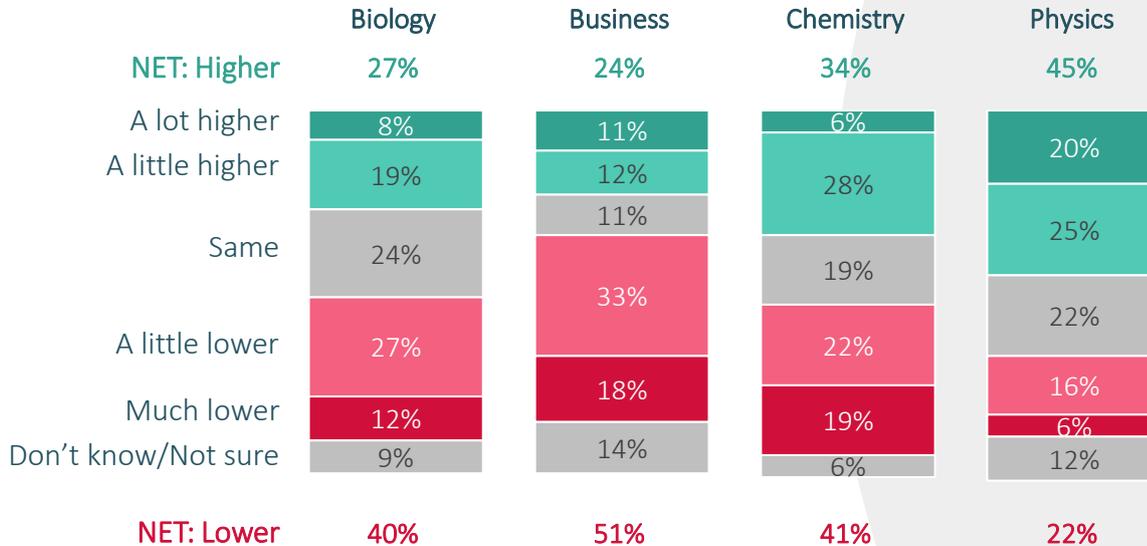


Q. Given that no marking schemes were supplied with the SEC sample examination papers for the subjects listed below, how helpful or not would it have been to you if you were supplied with a marking scheme?

(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

# Standard of New SEC Sample Papers Vs Current Leaving Cert C

For Biology, Business and Chemistry, more teachers believe that the standard of the SEC sample papers is lower than that currently available. For Physics, more believe the sample papers are of a higher standard.



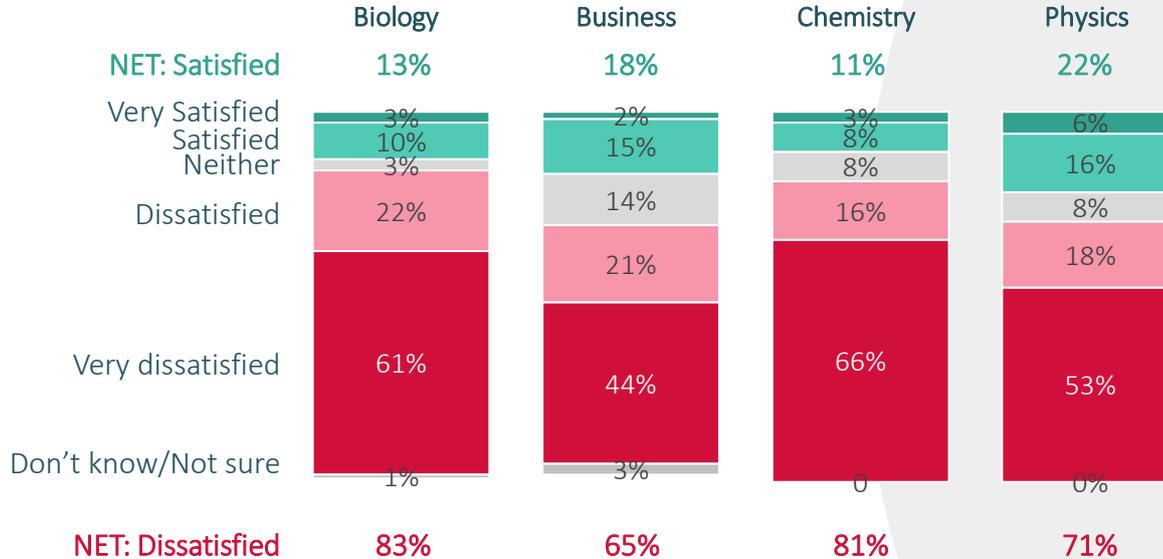
Q. Compared with the current Leaving Certificate examination papers, the standard of the SEC sample examination papers for each of the following subjects you teach is ...

(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

# Satisfaction With Proposed Percentage Allocation of Marks for AAC



Majority dissatisfied with the allocation of marks to the Additional Assessment Component (AAC) in Tranche 1 subjects and notably in Biology and Chemistry



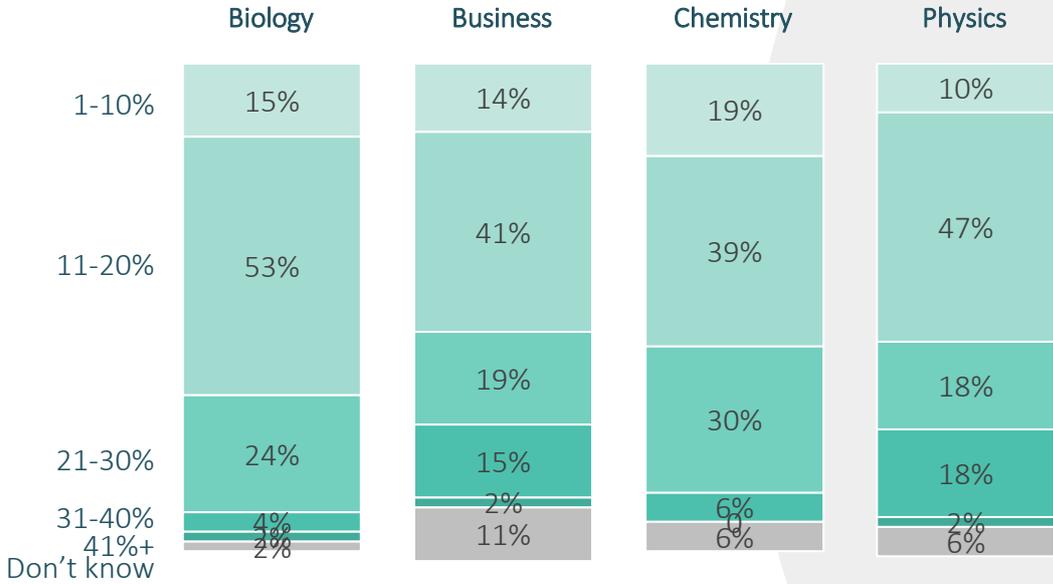
Q. To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the proposed percentage allocation of marks to the Additional Assessment Component (AAC) for each of the following subjects?

(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

# Preferred % Mark For The Additional Assessment Components (AAC)



Majority propose 20% or below across the four main Tranche 1 subjects.



Q. Please indicate your preferred % mark for the Additional Assessment Components (AAC) in the box provided below?

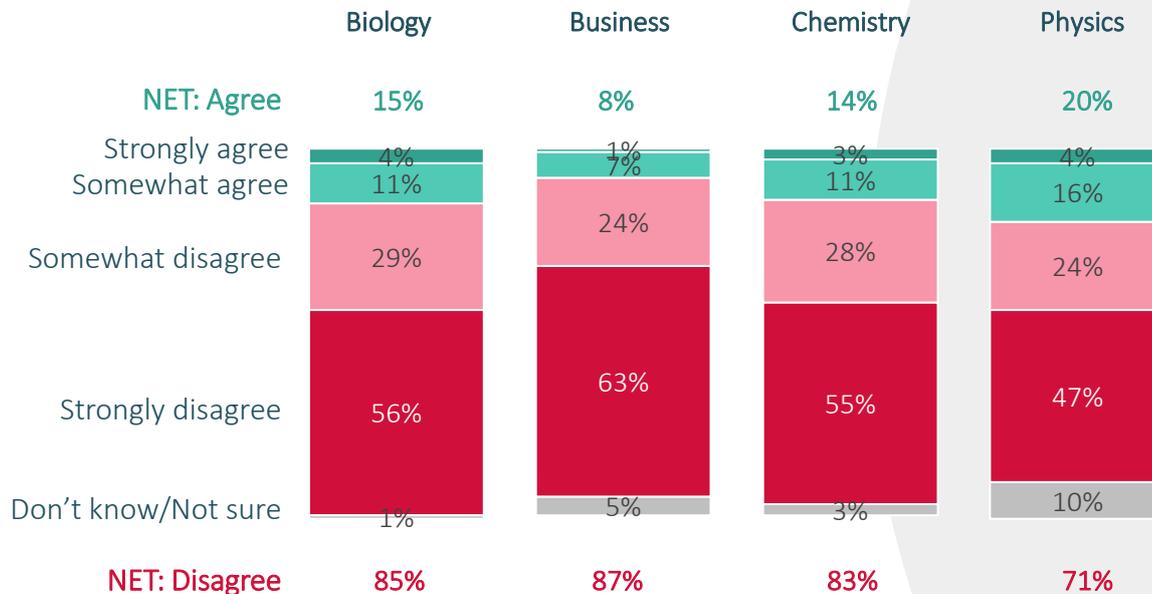
(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

\* = < 0.5%

# Most Disagree that AACs are Relatively Easy to Implement in the Classroom



Tranche 1 subjects of Biology, Business, Chemistry and Physics are not seen to be easy to implement the AAC



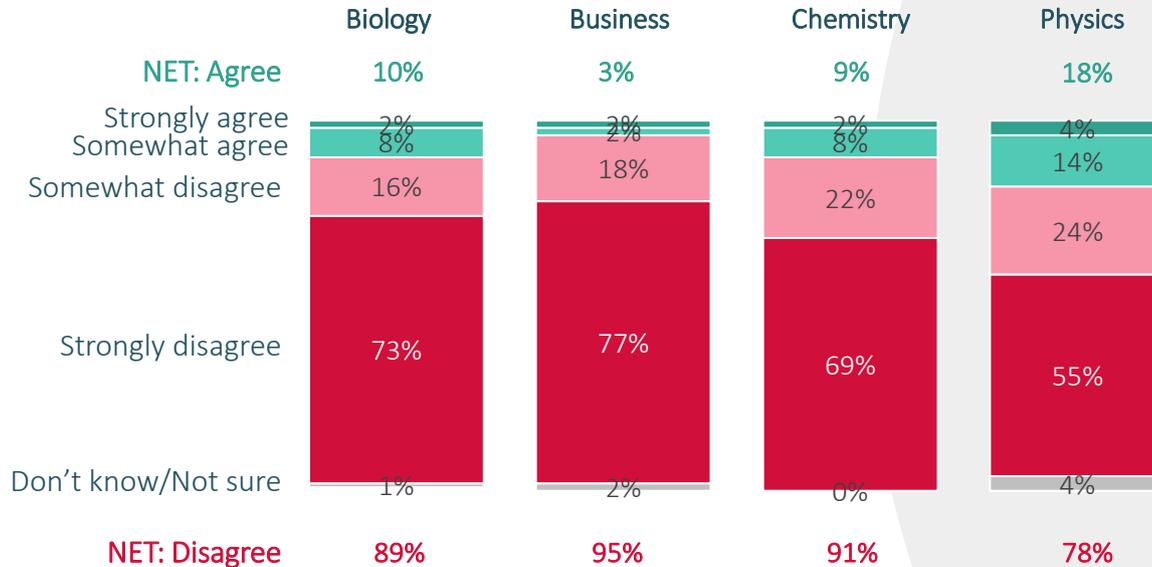
Q. Thinking specifically about <<YOUR AAC SUBJECT>>, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements  
(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

\* = < 0.5%

# Most Disagree With 'Expect To Have No Difficulties Authenticating That Work Submitted Has Been Completed Solely By The Student'



In the four main Tranche 1 Subjects, an overwhelming majority of teachers expect to have difficulties authenticating that the work submitted has been completed solely by the student.



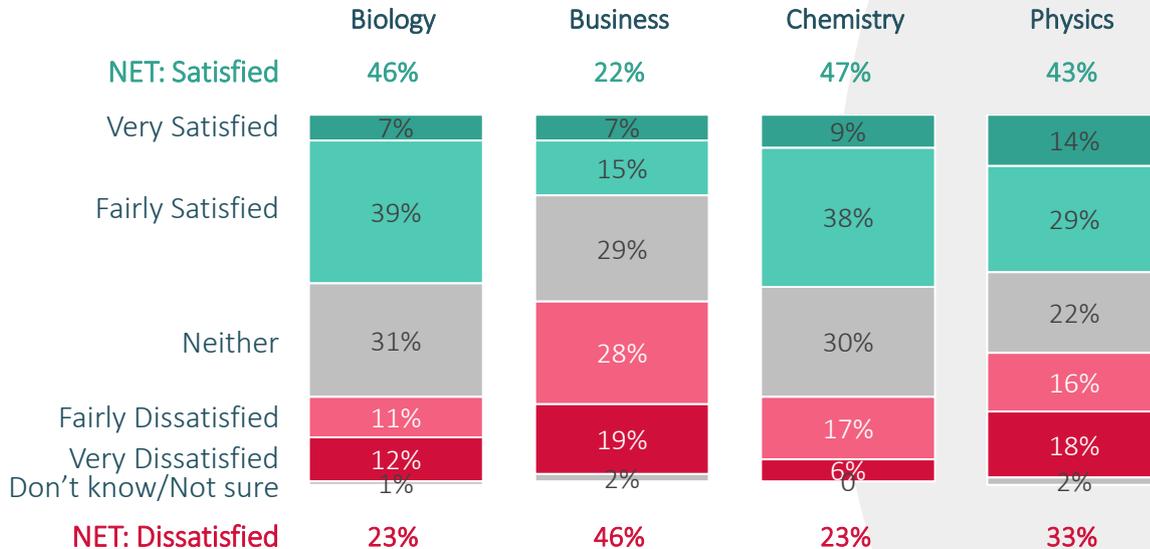
Q. Thinking specifically about << YOUR AAC SUBJECT >>, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements  
(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

\* = < 0.5%

# Satisfaction With Brief For The AAC Circulated In Jan 2026 For The Four Main Tranche 1 Subjects



Reasonable levels of satisfaction with the actual/live brief for the AAC circulated by the SEC in January 2026, with the exception of Business



Q. Thinking specifically about <<YOUR TRANCHE 1 SUBJECT>>, to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following

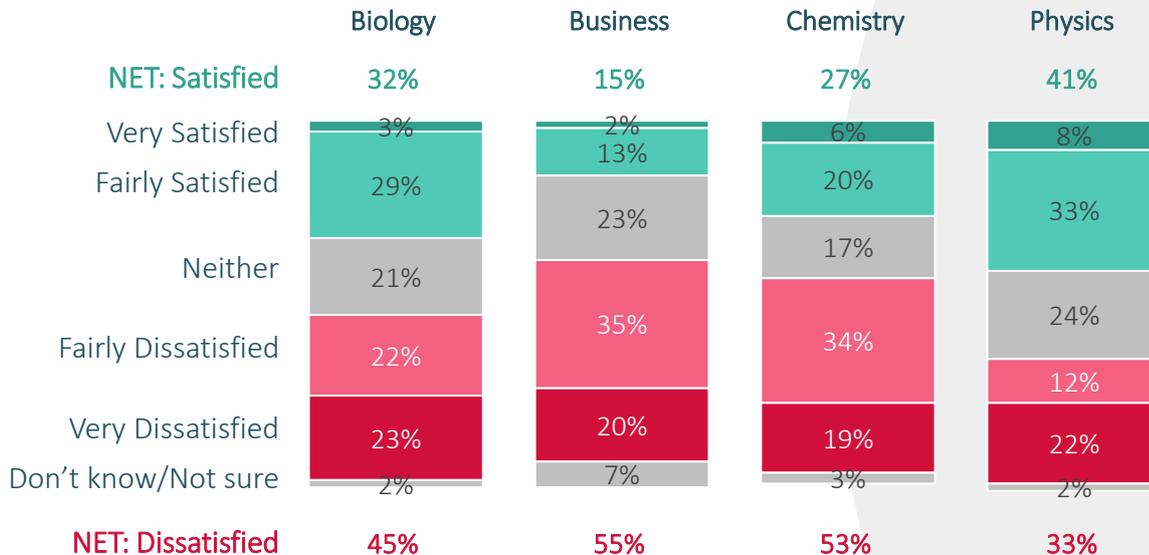
(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

\* = < 0.5%

# Clarity Of The Allocation Of Marks Provided By The SEC In Jan 2026



Relatively low levels of satisfaction with the clarity of the allocation of marks provided with the actual/live brief circulated by the SEC in January 2026



Q. Thinking specifically about <<YOUR TRANCHE 1 SUBJECT>>, to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the following

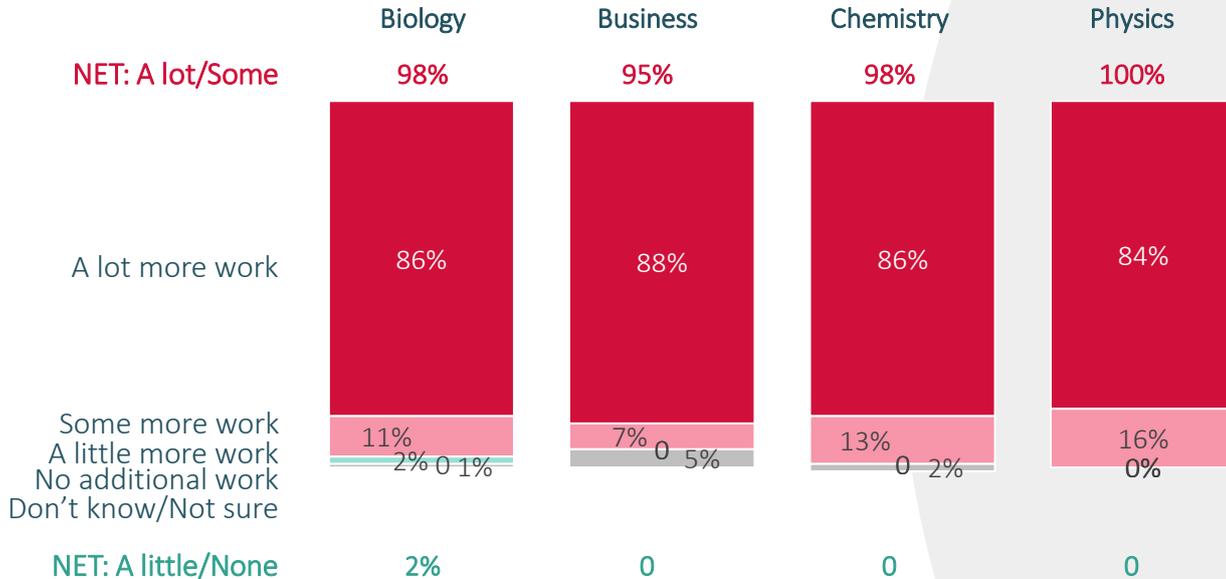
(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

\* = < 0.5%

# Additional Workload Involved In The ACC



A lot more work estimated to be involved for almost all teachers in the AAC



Q. Please describe your estimation of the additional workload involved for you in the AAC for each of the following Leaving Certificate subjects that you teach

(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

\* = < 0.5%

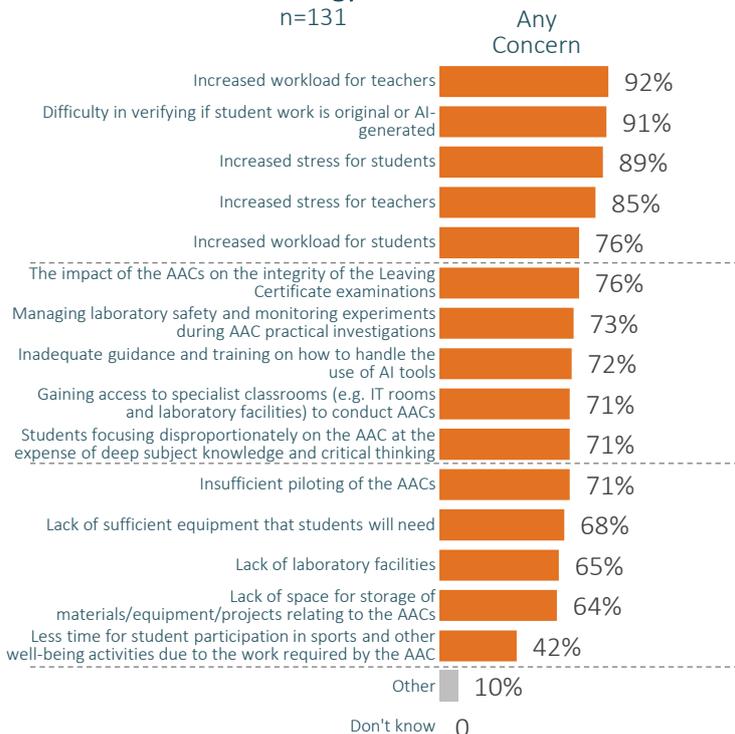
# Concerns about the AAC



Increased workload for teachers is the primary concern about the AACs

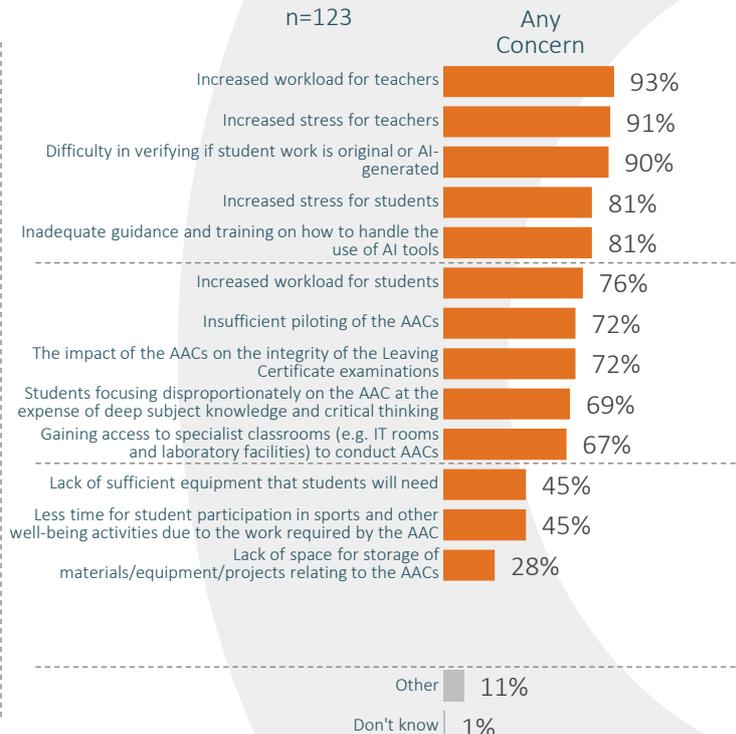
## Biology

n=131



## Business

n=123



Q. Which of the following are concerns you would have about the AAC for <<YOUR AAC SUBJECT>>?

Please select all that apply

Q. And which of these would be your main concern?

(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

# Concerns about the AAC

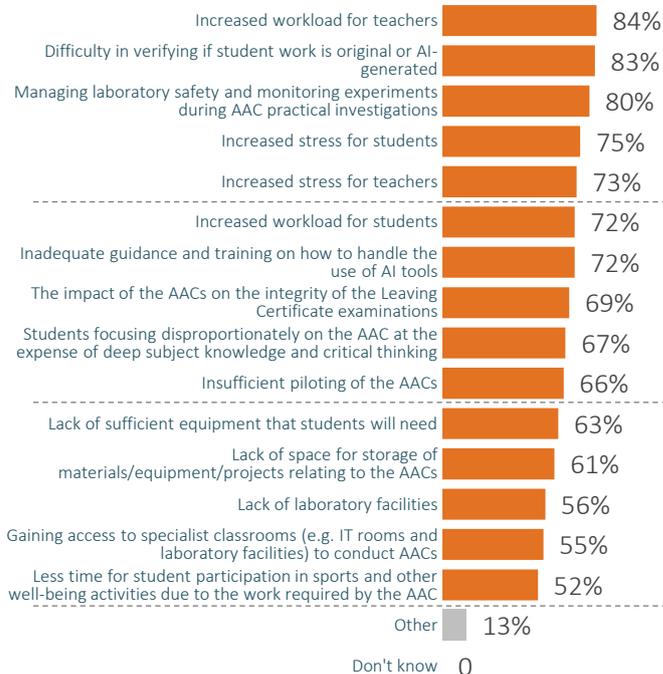


Increased workload for teachers is the primary concern about the AACs

## Chemistry

n=64

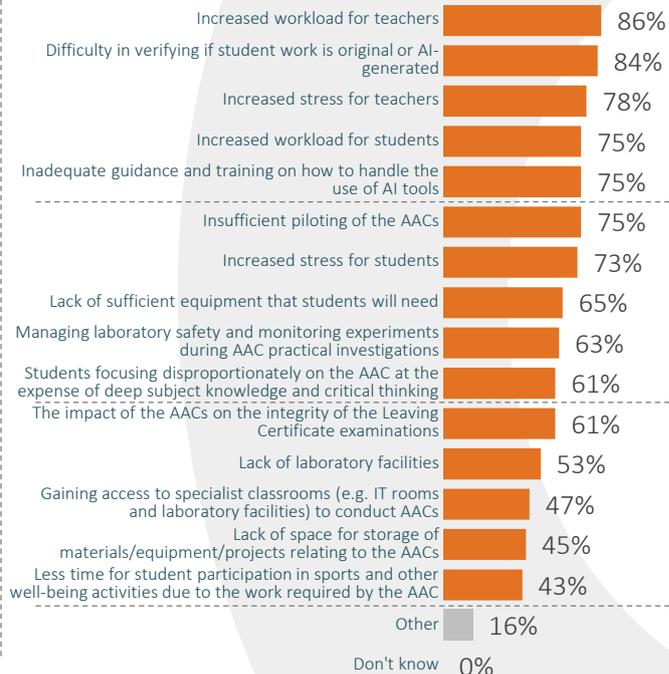
Any  
Concern



## Physics

n=51

Any  
Concern



Q. Which of the following are concerns you would have about the AAC for <<YOUR AAC SUBJECT>>?

Please select all that apply

Q. And which of these would be your main concern?

(Base: All Teachers of Each Subject)

4

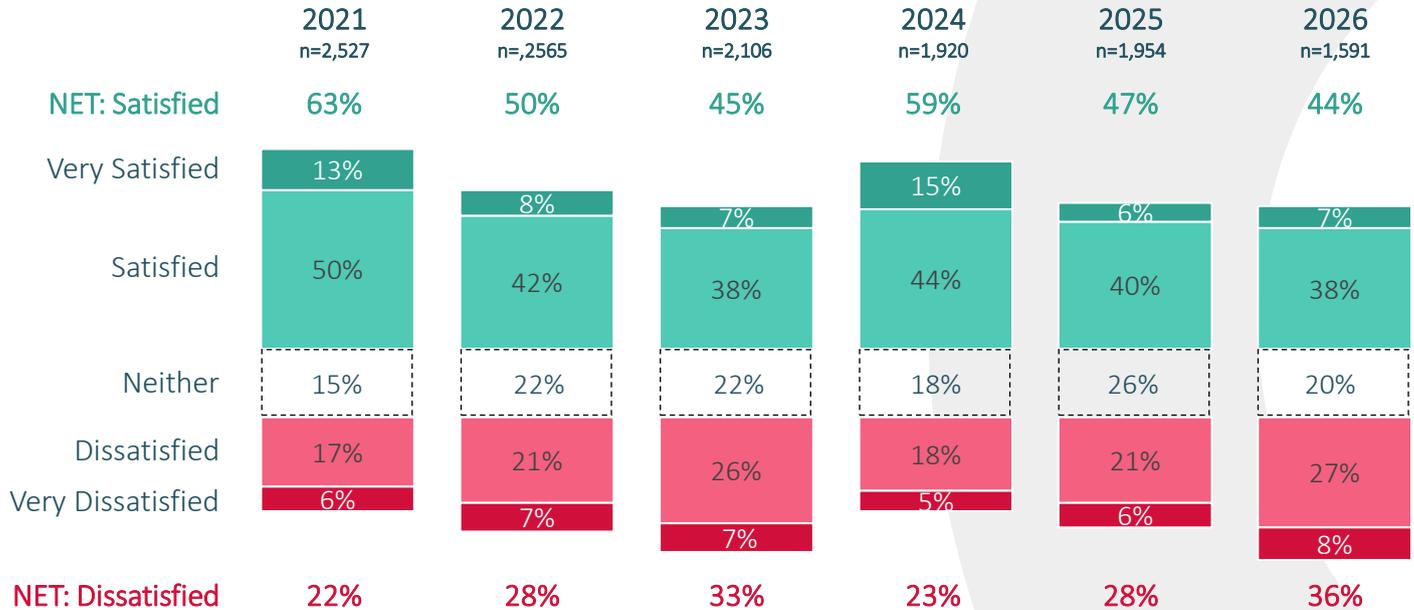
# Job Satisfaction



# Job Satisfaction



Concerning increase in job dissatisfaction in the past year



NOTE: Scores may not add exactly to 100% due to rounding

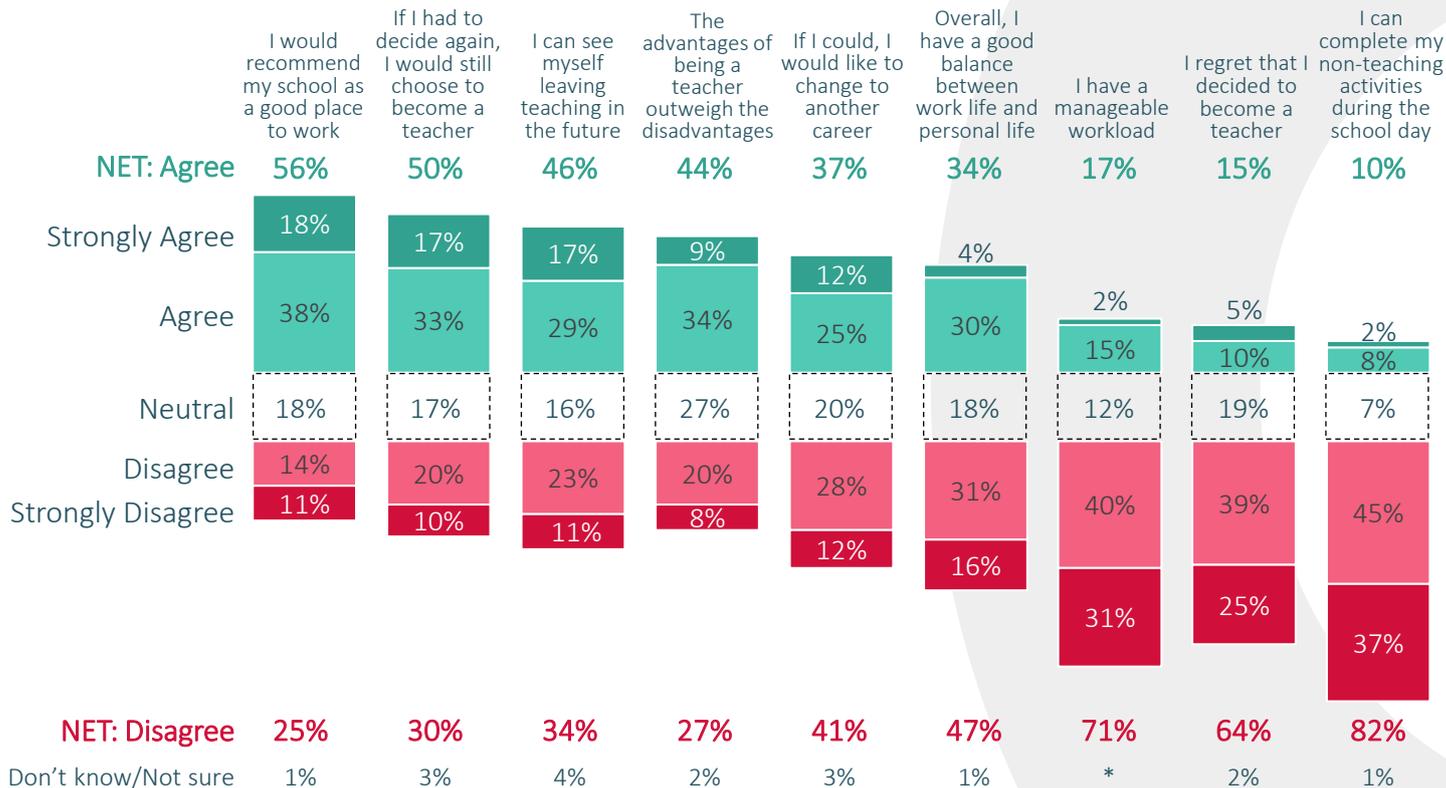
Q. Taking into account your current work duties and work environment, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your job?

(Base: All Respondents)

# Job Satisfaction Attitudes



Low agreement that non-teaching activities can be completed during the day. More than half however would recommend their school as a good place to work.



Q. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. Generally speaking, my experience is that:

(Base: All Respondents)

NOTE: Scores may not add exactly to 100% due to rounding

5

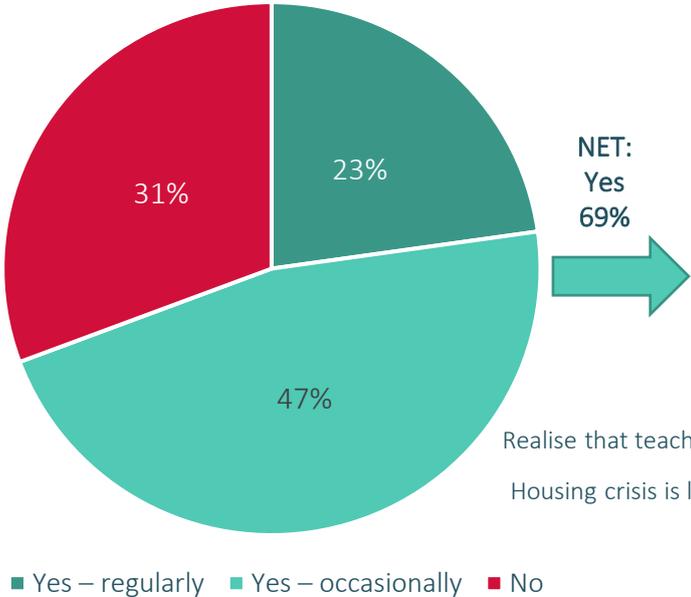
# Teacher Retention



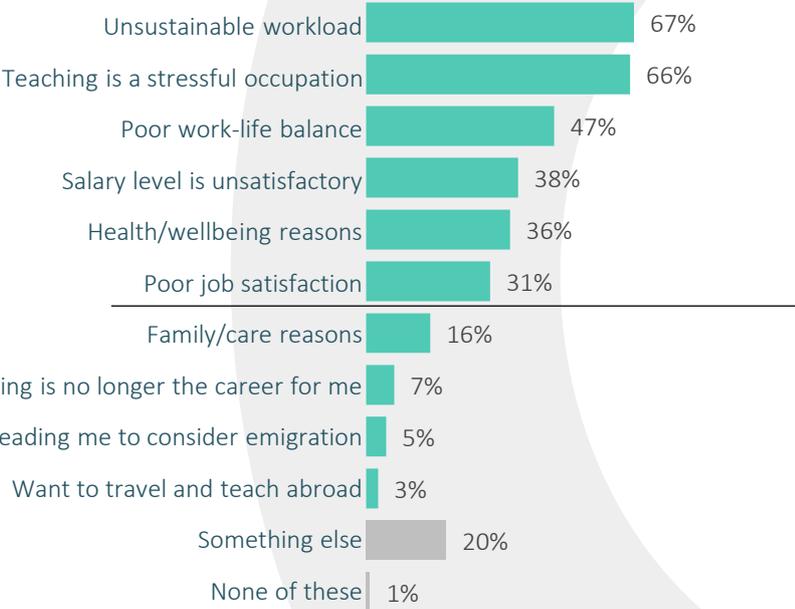
# Retention of Teachers



## If Considered Leaving Teaching?



## Reasons For Considering Leaving?



Q. Have you considered leaving teaching?

Q. Why have you considered leaving?

(Base: All Respondents)

6

# Oide Training

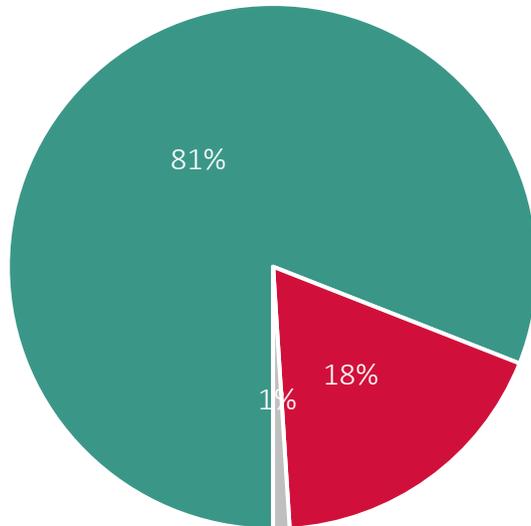


# Oide Training



Majority have attended Oide training with mixed views on the quality of it.

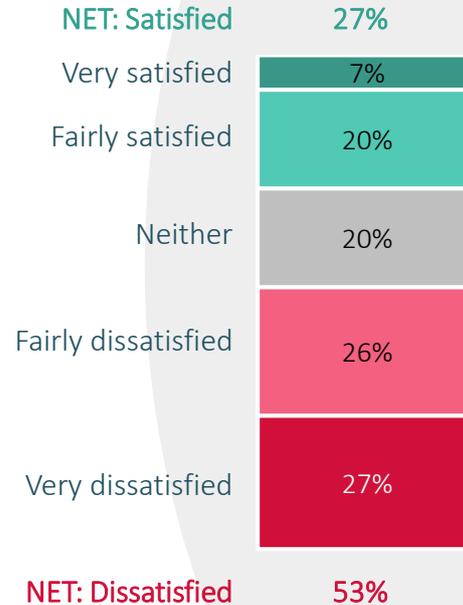
### Attended in Current Academic Year



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know / not sure



### Satisfaction with Quality



Q. Have you attended subject-specific training provided by Oide during the current academic year?

Q. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the quality of the subject-specific training provided by Oide?

(Base: All Teachers / All who attended (1284))

7

# Key themes



# Key Themes Emerging

*Note: This section is based on the replies to the open question, 'Finally, we invite you to use the space below to express any additional comments you wish to bring to the attention of the ASTI'.*

## Theme 1: The Additional Assessment Components (AACs)

- The following feedback represents teachers' responses specifically addressing dissatisfaction with the Additional Assessment Components (AACs) within the redeveloped Leaving Certificate. Across multiple subject areas, respondents express strong opposition to the design, weighting and structural implementation of the AACs.
- A recurring concern centres on the 40% allocation of marks, which many teachers regard as disproportionate and pedagogically unjustified. Respondents question whether the scale and format of the AAC are appropriate within a high stakes terminal examination system and raise objections to the model of AACs being introduced.
- The quotations overleaf focus specifically on criticisms of the AAC structure, weighting and overall appropriateness within the Leaving Certificate framework.

## Summary of Key Points

- A dominant theme is rejection of the 40% weighting attached to the AAC. Teachers frequently describe this proportion as excessive and disproportionate within a terminal examination system and argue that any project component should carry a significantly smaller weighting.
- Many respondents argue that the AAC, in its current form, alters the balance of the Leaving Certificate in ways they believe are inappropriate or unjustified.
- There are repeated calls for the percentage allocation to be reduced, postponed, or removed entirely.
- Overall, the prevailing sentiment in this theme is not opposition to innovation per se, but dissatisfaction with the scale, structure and positioning of the AAC within the assessment framework.

# What Teachers Are Saying... The Additional Assessment Components (AACs)

1

*AAC – worth 40%, how can we stand over work that is not completed in our presence.*

2

*40% AAC WAY TOO HIGH.*

3

*40% can be done by outside agencies... I feel it compromises the exam.*

4

*AAC needs to be postponed until schools are properly equipped.*

5

*New curriculum unsatisfactory, 40% is ridiculous for AAC. Students who cheat, plagiarise, make up results and get AI to write it up could end up with most of 40%. Very unfair...*

6

*AAC is happening way too fast... ambiguous information on Oide days... 40% for 11% of the course is ridiculous.*

# Key Themes Emerging

*Note: This section is based on the replies to the open question, 'Finally, we invite you to use the space below to express any additional comments you wish to bring to the attention of the ASTI'.*

## Theme 2: Workload Concerns

- This section presents qualitative feedback relating to workload concerns arising from recent and proposed changes to Senior Cycle specifications and assessment arrangements.
- Across subjects, teachers describe a system in which curricular breadth, assessment demands, and planning/administrative tasks are expanding without corresponding increases in preparation time, or resourcing. Respondents frequently refer to insufficient time to cover course material, the loss of revision time, and the practical difficulties of managing AACs alongside existing obligations.
- Comments also point to the cumulative effect of simultaneous reform across multiple subjects, with teachers reporting that the workload associated with preparing new materials, interpreting specifications, supporting students, and meeting deadlines is increasingly unsustainable. While the language used varies, from measured professional concern to explicit statements of stress and burnout, the overall pattern is consistent: teachers perceive a widening gap between what is expected and what is feasible within the realities of school timetables and teacher working time.

## Summary of Key Points

- A consistent concern is that course length and the volume of learning outcomes remain high (and, in some cases, are perceived to have increased), while time allocations are unchanged or insufficient. Teachers repeatedly describe difficulty 'getting through' the course, with revision time being compressed or eliminated.
- Teachers highlight the cumulative workload created by additional assessment requirements (including projects and practical components), particularly where these are layered onto existing syllabi rather than replacing content in a meaningful way. This is described as adding substantial planning, supervision, correction, and administrative work.
- A number of comments emphasise the knock-on effect across the school year: disruptions to class contact time, competing deadlines, and the clustering of assessment demands in already busy periods. This is described as increasing pressure on both teachers and students.
- Workload concerns are expressed across a wide range of subjects, suggesting that the issue is systemic rather than subject-specific. Respondents also point to the interaction between subject reforms, school timetables, and limited preparation time.
- Finally, the dataset includes direct statements of stress, exhaustion, and reduced professional morale. Several teachers describe the workload trajectory as unsustainable and warn of negative impacts on teaching quality, student experience, and teacher retention.

# What Teachers Are Saying... Workload Concerns



1

*The workload is endless and I feel I'm never on top of anything anymore.*

2

*Unless I do work on at least one day every weekend I can't keep on top of things anymore.*

3

*The constant stream of new initiatives... nothing is ever taken away.*

4

*The additional roles added on our plates every meeting are untenable.*

5

*The workload in teaching is way beyond what was expected when I qualified.*

6

*I spend so many evenings late in school... all my lesson preparation, assessment and content creation is done in my own personal time.*

# Key Themes Emerging

*Note: This section is based on the replies to the open question, 'Finally, we invite you to use the space below to express any additional comments you wish to bring to the attention of the ASTI'.*

## Theme 3: The role of artificial intelligence in undermining the validity of the assessment process

- The feedback presented in this theme comprise qualitative teachers' comments relating specifically to the role of artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI tools, in undermining the validity of the assessment within AAC projects of Senior Cycle subjects. The responses were provided in a single open-ended question and include references across a wide range of subjects, with particular emphasis on the implications for assessment integrity where students can generate, refine, or substantially construct written work using AI.
- Teachers repeatedly describe the difficulty of verifying authorship of work submitted, the likelihood of unfair advantage for students who have greater access to devices, paid supports, or digitally literate assistance, and the professional risk to teachers who may be expected to authenticate or 'sign off' on work completed partly outside direct supervision.
- Many responses explicitly refer to plagiarism, cheating, fabricated results, and the practical impossibility of detecting AI use with confidence in a high-stakes context. While some teachers recognise that AI is now a reality in education and could have legitimate learning uses, the dominant concern of teachers is that the current assessment of 40% of marks in a high-stakes examination will pressurise students into using AI tools to complete AAC coursework and place teachers in untenable positions when required to judge what is, or is not, genuinely the student's own.

## Summary of Key Points

- A central message across the dataset is that AI has changed the practical meaning of 'student work'. Teachers argue that written reports and extended coursework tasks can be produced, improved, or fully generated using AI, making it extremely difficult to treat such submissions as reliable evidence of individual attainment.
- Many respondents state that authentication of student work is not realistically achievable. Teachers describe being placed in professionally ethical/conflicting situations where they may be expected to 'sign off' on authenticity, potentially triggering conflict with students and parents when AI use is suspected but cannot be proven.
- Analysis of data shows a heavy emphasis on AI-related risks to equity and fairness. Teachers note that access to devices, paid supports, and outside guidance from third parties can widen achievement gaps, and that AI-assisted work may be disproportionately polished compared with the student's underlying understanding.
- Several comments highlight the likelihood of plagiarism, fabrication, and 'made-up' results in project-style components, particularly where data can be invented and the write-up produced by AI. This is viewed as undermining the credibility of grades and the integrity of national certification.
- Finally, while some teachers acknowledge that AI could be used constructively as a learning tool, the prevailing view in this theme is that assessment models must be redesigned to reduce incentives for inauthentic work and to remove unrealistic burdens on teachers to detect or prove AI misuse.

# What Teachers Are Saying... The role of Artificial Intelligence in undermining the validity of the assessment process

1

*It will be impossible to prove plagiarism for the AACs.*

2

*Monitoring of AI in new LC projects worth 40% – impossible task.*

3

*Teachers should not be expected to authenticate students' work when AI may have been used.*

4

*There is no way of telling if a student used AI to complete their AAC.*

5

*The idea that I have to sign that the work of an 18-year-old is their own work is ridiculous.*

6

*The AAC with AI are impossible to manage or authenticate.*

7

*Concerned around signing off on work that is 40% of students Leaving Cert. It will be inevitable that parents, siblings will do a lot of it at home for them...*

# Key Themes Emerging

*Note: This section is based on the replies to the open question, 'Finally, we invite you to use the space below to express any additional comments you wish to bring to the attention of the ASTI'.*

## Theme 4: Laboratory Safety, Laboratory Resources, Lack of Laboratory Technicians

- Analysis of the feedback showed teachers continually referring to the practical realities of delivering practical science work in schools, with a particular focus on laboratory safety, laboratory facilities and resources, access to laboratories, and the availability of laboratory technicians.
- Across Biology, Chemistry and Physics, teachers describe significant anxiety about the capacity of many schools to facilitate individual practical investigations safely and equitably, particularly where AAC project work requires multiple students to carry out different experiments within the same class period. Respondents highlight the central importance of health and safety compliance, including the need for appropriate risk assessments, safe supervision ratios, suitable laboratory layouts, and adequate storage and disposal arrangements for chemicals and waste. Many comments emphasise that laboratory access is already constrained in schools where a small number of laboratories must be shared among multiple teachers and year groups, limiting the feasibility of extended investigative work.
- A further recurring issue is the lack of laboratory technicians, with teachers reporting that they are required to assume additional duties including ordering chemicals, preparing apparatus, setting up and dismantling practical work, and managing safe disposal. These constraints are frequently linked to stress and professional concern, particularly where teachers feel responsible for maintaining safe practice while simultaneously meeting assessment deadlines and supervising diverse practical activities.

## Summary of Key Points

- Teachers repeatedly link the introduction of investigation-style AAC/project work to heightened laboratory safety concerns. A common issue is the difficulty of supervising multiple different experiments simultaneously, particularly with full classes and limited bench space.
- Health and safety compliance and the burden of risk assessments feature strongly. Respondents describe uncertainty about how risk assessments will be managed for many different student-designed investigations and express concern about being expected to carry responsibility without adequate structural supports.
- Inadequate laboratory facilities and limited access to laboratories are highlighted as practical barriers. Schools with a small number of labs shared among several teachers report timetabling constraints that restrict practical work and increase pressure during peak periods.
- The lack of laboratory technicians emerges as a systemic deficiency. Teachers describe being required to carry out technician duties - preparation, ordering, set-up, clean-up, and safe disposal - adding significantly to workload and increasing stress.
- Equipment and chemical resource issues are frequently cited, including insufficient apparatus to run multiple investigations safely, limited availability of specialist safety infrastructure, and disparities between schools in their capacity to resource practical work.
- Overall, the dataset suggests that without additional technician support, upgraded laboratory infrastructure, and clear safety guidance (including workable models for supervision and risk assessment), the safe implementation of AAC practical investigations will be difficult in many schools.

# What Teachers Are Saying... Laboratory Safety, Laboratory Resources, Lack of Laboratory Technicians

1

*Running a lab safely and effectively is hugely time consuming – teachers have to order, prepare and dispose of chemicals.*

2

*No lab technician.*

3

*Science teachers are doing two jobs – teacher and technician.*

4

*AAC cannot conduct meaningful investigations with 24 students. Lab accommodation and resources are just not available.*

5

*Senior science AAC will lead to a lot of health and safety issues in under-equipped schools.*

6

*...Running a lab safely and effectively is hugely time consuming - teachers have to order, prepare and dispose of chemicals. Some schools have access to lab technicians, some don't, greatly impacts the amount of practical work that can be carried out safely. Again, creating an unfair system...*

# Key Themes Emerging

*Note: This section is based on the replies to the open question, 'Finally, we invite you to use the space below to express any additional comments you wish to bring to the attention of the ASTI'.*

## Theme 5: Teacher Retention

- The comments analysed under this theme highlight growing concern among teachers that the profession is becoming increasingly unattractive as a long-term career.
- Respondents frequently refer to the cumulative effects of rising workload, expanding administrative requirements, and the continuous introduction of new curriculum initiatives as factors that are undermining morale within the profession.
- While many teachers emphasise that they continue to value the core aspects of their work, particularly the opportunity to teach and support young people, they also describe an environment in which the demands of the job are becoming progressively more difficult to sustain.
- Some teachers explicitly state that they would not recommend teaching as a career to younger people, including their own children, due to the pressures associated with the role.

## Summary of Key Points

- A dominant concern among teachers is the long-term attractiveness of teaching as a profession. Many respondents emphasise that while they continue to value the core purpose of teaching, the cumulative pressures associated with the role are making it increasingly difficult to sustain a full-time career in the profession.
- Many teachers report that the workload associated with planning, administration, curriculum reform and assessment has expanded significantly in recent years. As a result, some respondents state that they have moved to job-sharing arrangements or reduced hours in order to maintain a manageable work-life balance.
- Teachers express concern that the combined effects of workload, administrative demands, and continuous reform may contribute to difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers in the future. Teachers warn that if these pressures continue to increase, fewer graduates may choose to enter teacher education programmes while experienced teachers may seek alternative career paths or early retirement.
- Teachers raise wider questions about the sustainability of the profession and the potential implications for teacher supply in the years ahead.

# What Teachers Are Saying... Teacher Retention



1

*If the increase in workload due to curriculum change continues the job will become too stressful for a large cohort to bother becoming a teacher. Also it will lead to a large number of teachers leaving the profession.*

2

*I enjoy many aspects of teaching. However I can't keep up with the workload. I am easing the pressure for next year by going job-sharing.*

3

*I feel that teaching has become stressful over the last few years. The only reason I wouldn't consider leaving teaching is that I hope to retire in about 6 years. I would not advise my kids to go into teaching.*

# Key Themes Emerging

Note: This section is based on the replies to the open question, 'Finally, we invite you to use the space below to express any additional comments you wish to bring to the attention of the ASTI'.



## Theme 6: Stress on students and teachers

- A very high number of responses in the survey highlight the growing levels of stress experienced by both teachers and students within the Irish secondary school system. The comments reveal widespread concern about the cumulative pressures associated with curriculum reform, increasing administrative demands, and the introduction of additional assessment components in the proposed Senior Cycle reforms.
- Many teachers describe a profession that has become increasingly demanding, with expectations extending well beyond the traditional role of classroom teaching. Respondents frequently refer to stress, anxiety and burnout as recurring features of the modern teaching environment. Teachers report that the constant introduction of new initiatives, combined with insufficient time, training and resources, has created a working environment in which workload pressures are becoming difficult to sustain.
- In addition, several respondents highlight the growing responsibility placed on schools to support students experiencing mental health difficulties, particularly in the absence of adequate external services. Teachers note that they are increasingly expected to respond to complex emotional and psychological needs while simultaneously implementing curriculum reforms and preparing students for high stakes examinations.
- Concerns are also raised about the impact of these pressures on students themselves, with *“The job is putting a lot of stress on teachers with diminishing job satisfaction and a terrible work/life balance”*.
- Some respondents suggesting that the introduction of additional project based assessments will increase rather than reduce stress levels.
- Taken together, the comments presented in this section illustrate a widespread perception that both teacher wellbeing and student wellbeing are being placed under significant strain within the current system.

# Key Themes Emerging

*Note: This section is based on the replies to the open question, 'Finally, we invite you to use the space below to express any additional comments you wish to bring to the attention of the ASTI'.*



## Summary of Key Points

- The responses analysed under this theme indicate that stress has become a major concern within the teaching profession. Teachers repeatedly describe a working environment characterised by increasing workload, continuous reform and expanding expectations. Many respondents attribute rising stress levels to the pace of educational change, particularly the introduction of new specifications and additional assessment components. These reforms are viewed by some teachers as adding significant administrative and assessment burdens without providing sufficient time, training or resources for effective implementation.
- Several respondents also highlight the emotional and pastoral pressures associated with supporting students who are experiencing anxiety and mental health difficulties. With long waiting lists for external services such as counselling and psychological support, schools are increasingly expected to act as the primary point of support for vulnerable students. Teachers indicate that while they are committed to supporting students, they often feel that they lack the professional training and resources required to respond to these complex needs effectively.
- A further theme evident in the comments is the perception that the proposed changes to Senior Cycle assessment will inadvertently increase stress rather than reduce it. Teachers express concern that multiple project based assessments occurring across several subjects could place sustained pressure on students over the two year cycle. At the same time, teachers anticipate a substantial increase in workload associated with supervising, supporting and authenticating these assessments.
- The cumulative effect of these factors is a strong sense among respondents that both teacher wellbeing and student wellbeing are under increasing strain within the current educational environment.

# What Teachers Are Saying... Stress on students and teachers



1

*The curriculum is putting enormous stress on teachers as well as students.*

2

*I worry it will cause additional stress for students not alleviate it.*

3

*The fast tracking of the Senior Cycle Reform is placing an unbearable pressure on schools.*

4

*The job is putting a lot of stress on teachers with diminishing job satisfaction and a terrible work/life balance.*

5

*Teacher wellbeing seems to be a very low priority.*

6

*The introduction of several new subjects or specifications, each with an additional assessment component will cause undue, extreme stress for both students and teachers.*

7

*The lack of external supports for students with mental health needs is placing huge stress on teachers.*

# THANK YOU

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