

STEM FUTURES: UNIVERSITY PATHWAY

2026



Silver

BACKGROUND

EDT's vision is a society where all young people can develop the STEM skills, knowledge and experience they need to take control of their futures and change the world around them.

In June - August 2026 we ran the STEM Futures: University Pathway for the first time and had over 450 students take part.

The aim of the programme is to introduce Year 11/ 12/S4-S6 (ages 15-17) students to STEM subjects at university, to understand what it is like to study STEM at university and the careers they can lead to.

The course comprises of six sections:

(1) Live Sessions

During the course there were 40 live sessions for students to choose from (they needed to attend at least 5). These included sample lectures, admissions talks, advice on applications and university life and panel sessions from STEM professionals and current students.

(2) STEM Subjects at University

An introduction to STEM subjects, how they are taught, the differences between common options such as different sciences or engineering courses.

(3) University Life

An introduction to a variety of subjects around university life such as student accommodation, budgeting, commuting to university and societies. After section 2 and 3 students create a university choices action plan to research and narrow down their options ready for applications.

(4) University Lectures

A selection of pre-recorded lectures from a variety of universities across STEM and the UK giving students an introduction to how lectures are taught at university level (student need to watch at least 4).

(5) Project Activity

A variety of interactive projects set up universities and STEM companies giving students an introduction to STEM based projects across a choice of disciplines.

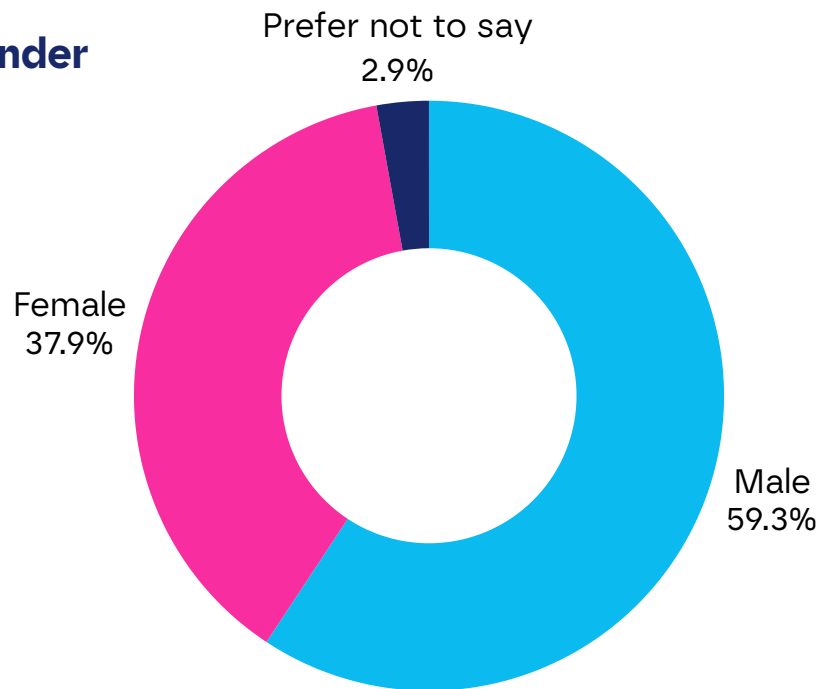
(6) Graduation Project

A chance for students to research and present on an area of their choice inspired by the course.

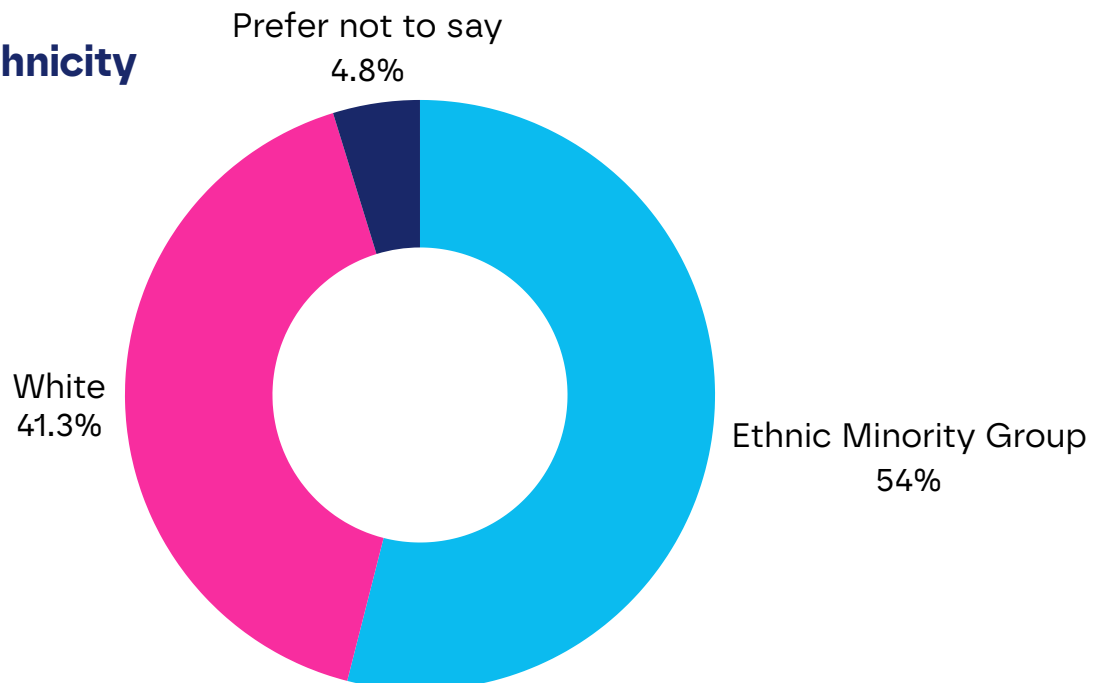
Young Person Demographics

472 participated in the STEM Futures course in 2026

Gender

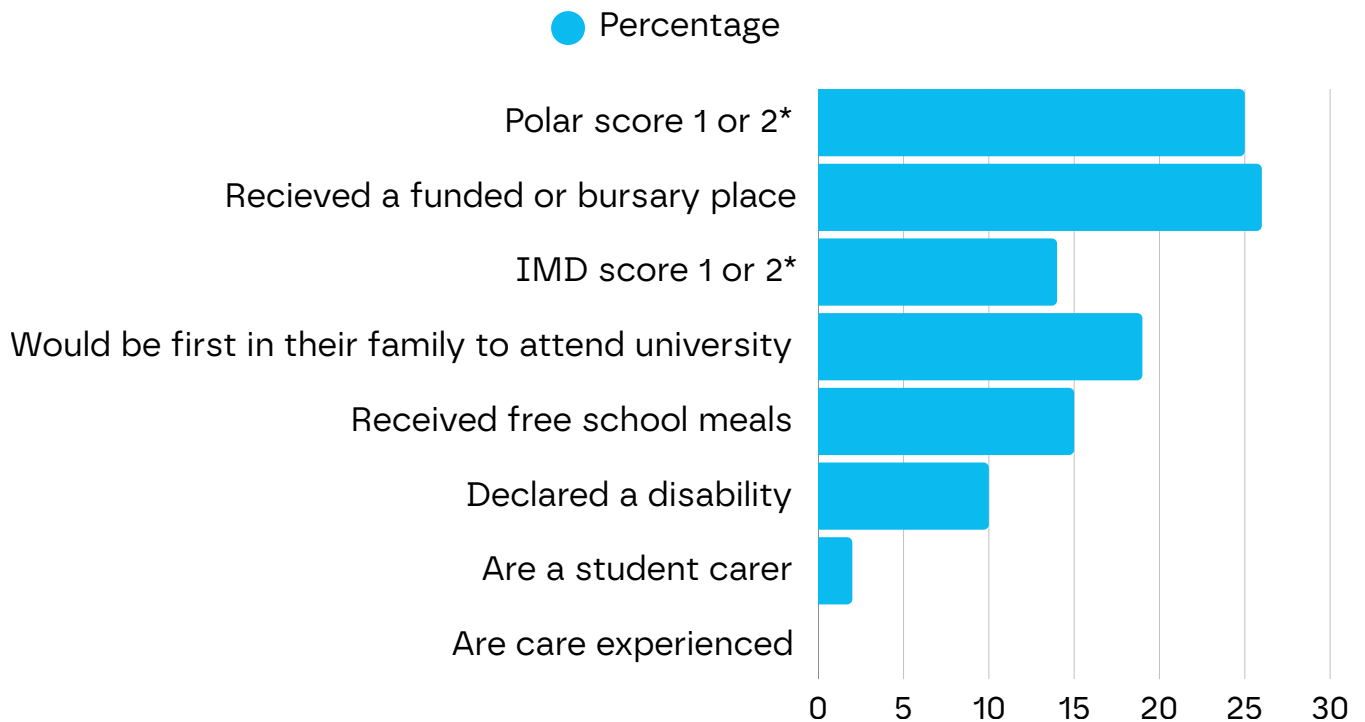


Ethnicity



Young Person Demographics

472 participated in the STEM Futures course in 202



Percentage of young people

*IMD Score: young people come from the 20% most deprived areas as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

*Polar Score: young people live in areas with low progression rates of 18 year olds into higher education

CASE STUDY - KATE WALL



"This programme really helped me explore the different options within engineering sectors and pathways that can lead to engineering roles. I've improved my confidence in facing my academic future and potential careers. As well as this, it opened up my mind to some engineering courses that I didn't even know existed which has helped me prepare to make choices about university or apprenticeships. This course has helped me decide on what sector I would like to pursue. I really enjoyed the project, the one I chose was making a bioplastic, as it allowed me to get hands on in my own home. I also enjoyed the university lectures because they spanned a wide range of interesting subjects. If you are considering a career in STEM, I would suggest that you should attempt to pursue this. There are so many potential careers that there really is something for everyone. Many of these careers have a great impact on the advancement of society and helping people which is very rewarding. You should explore your options because there may be more than you thought."

Student comments:



"I found the course very helpful as it gave me information on parts of university life that people tend to avoid discussing. I found the lectures most insightful as to how note taking should be done. I felt that the lectures further enhanced my curiosity and excited me more on the subjects which were talked about."

"This course was extremely useful to me, it opened my eyes to the wider world of STEM and I can't wait to explore further with time."

"The course helped me provide a better insight into the breadth of careers in engineering in science, taught me aspects about building your career and other aspects such as networking and moving abroad. I also developed my subject knowledge beyond the spec of the subjects I have studied, and introduced me to new areas through lectures, live sessions and projects."

"It was very helpful, easy to understand and progress through, extremely engaging. The most useful things were the live lessons and university lectures. The live sessions were engaging and relevant to me. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the STEM Pathways course! It was a brilliant opportunity to explore cutting-edge topics—like AI in healthcare and modern engineering—that go beyond the standard secondary school curriculum. The most useful part was the independent research project, as it pushed me to synthesize technical concepts and think like an innovator. The live sessions were engaging and well-structured, giving great context to the independent study modules. Overall, it boosted my academic confidence and confirmed my passion for pursuing a STEM degree!"

"I thoroughly enjoyed the course. It has only allowed my love of STEM to further blossom and I am now positive that I would love to follow a career in stem. My favourite part of the course was the project."

"I enjoyed the balance between live sessions, independent learning and creative assignments, and I believe the course has made me more confident when considering my future university and career choices."

"The course was very beneficial and it helped shine light on what future career path in STEM I would like to pursue, in addition to useful information about university and the next steps I could take."

"The ability to hear from experienced engineers in the industry as well as hearing from past EDT alumni broadened my understanding of the numerous engineering careers and different engineering disciplines. The course has grown my interest in areas I have never done research in; the recorded lectures were my favourite due to the amount of detail they went into and they were led by people who had a passion in their field."

Live Sessions:

An integral part of the STEM Futures course is live sessions with educational and industry professionals, students need to attend at least five to complete the course. On this year's course we had 40 live sessions for the students to choose from. All the sessions included the opportunity for young people to ask questions making it a very beneficial part of the course.

The sessions included:

- Sample lectures from a range of universities in STEM subjects.
- Admissions sessions from a range of universities explaining the range of STEM subjects and the admissions process including support with UCAS applications.
- Careers sessions with STEM professionals to show students where they can take their STEM career post-university as well as options for placements and degree apprenticeships.
- Q'n'As with current students and previous course participants to find out about university life and how it is for undergraduates.
- A live cook along session so students could learn how to cook a budget friendly recipe before cooking for themselves at universities.

Student comments:

“The live sessions were amazing, it really helped to have questions answered by professionals and hearing from current university students really helped ease my nerves about my future!”

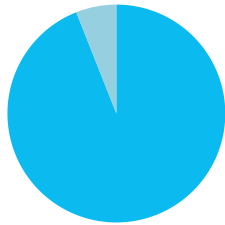
“I think it was amazing, the live sessions really helped me talk to the lecturers up front and ask questions.”

“I enjoyed the interactive aspects of many live sessions and the opportunity to ask questions to professionals. I found the UCAS personal statement advice very helpful, particularly in brainstorming the range of experiences I should include. Hearing from university students about their own personal experiences also gave me an idea of what studying at university is actually like as well as the extracurricular activities available at university.”

“The most useful parts were the live sessions with university speakers and professionals, as they provided realistic insights into what studying STEM at university is like and gave us the opportunity to ask questions.”

HOW WE MET OUR OBJECTIVES

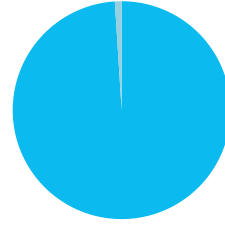
We aimed to increase students' confidence in their careers choices:



94%

had confidence at the end of the course

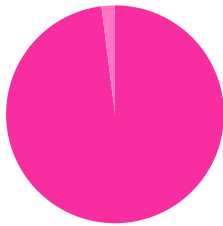
We aimed to inspire them to study a STEM related subject at university:



99%

likely to study a STEM related subject at university

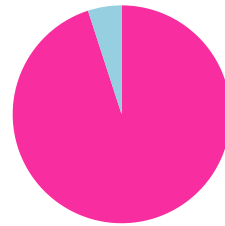
We aimed to increase students awareness in the STEM opportunities available to them at university:



98%

had increased awareness at the end of the course

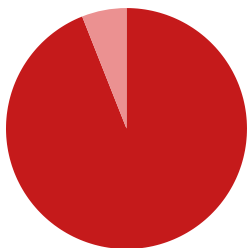
We aimed to increase their skills and knowledge:



95%

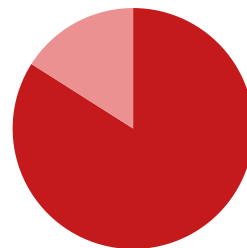
had increased their skills and knowledge at the end of the course

We aimed to create a high value course



94%

rated the course as Good or Excellent at the end of the course

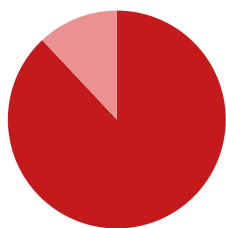


84%

would recommend the course to younger pupils at their school for the future

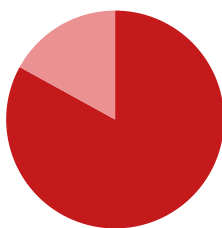
SKILLS

Percentage of students that increased the following skills:



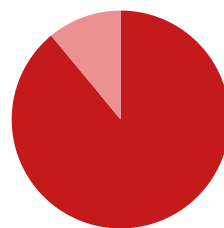
88%

written communication



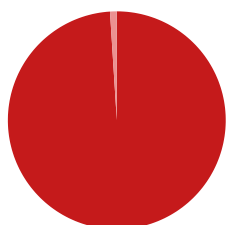
83%

confidence



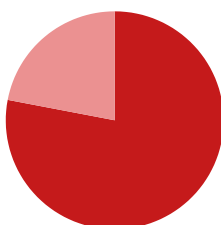
89%

resilience



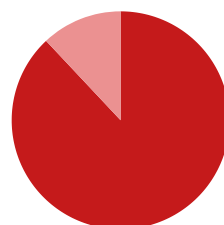
99%

problem solving



78%

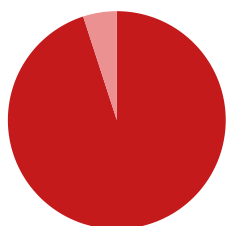
written presentation



88%

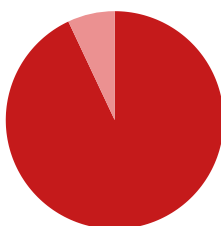
other work related skills e.g.
planning own time or writing
reports

Percentage of students that agreed with the following statements:



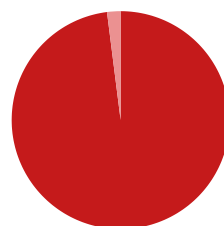
95%

the course has given me a
good knowledge and
understanding of different
STEM Careers



93%

the course has given me a
good knowledge and
understanding of how to get
into a STEM Career



98%

I would like to study STEM
subjects after leaving
school

CASE STUDY - MENGYAO AI



"During the EDT STEM Futures University Pathways course, I worked on a project where I designed a mission to Mars. This covered physics calculations to determine the speed and trajectories required for the spacecraft to leave Earth, ideas for the spacecrafts structural design, and a weekly food plan for the crew. For my graduation project, I wrote a report on spacecraft thermal control systems, building directly on the concepts from my Mars project. Both of these projects allowed me to dive much deeper into physics and engineering, bridging the gap between what I learned in school and STEM topics at university. Building upon my interest in aerospace, mechanical, and electrical/electronic engineering, the EDT STEM Futures course offered a realistic taste of university-level engineering. The course made it much easier to see how my specific skills and interests fit into which STEM discipline through the taster lectures and helpful guidance comparing different STEM subjects. Attending taster sessions and university lectures, such as those offered in the EDT STEM Futures University Pathways course, is one of the best ways to discover what genuinely interests you and see how your skills align with different fields."

CASE STUDY - DANIEL GALANTINI



"I decided on this course because it offered an industry recognised award at the end of it. I worked on the Sheffield University Formula Student project, which taught me all about design compromise. In the process of the STEM Futures course, it has helped me decide, primarily through the live sessions, that a degree apprenticeship in aerospace engineering is my preferred way to go forward in my engineering career. The most useful session was the panel of degree apprentices, talking about their experiences in the role. My favourite part of the course was doing the formula student project - the subject matter was already a winner for me, but then learning and applying principles of engineering, specifically designing for compromise, was a very fulfilling task, which has set me up well for the future."

THANK YOU

We would like to thank all our contributing universities, companies and panellists.

Without your support we wouldn't have been able to inspire so many young people into STEM careers and education.