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# European Software Skills Alliance.

Case Study

## An open education model for underserved students to be career-ready

**Presented by:** IBM

**Industry:** Information and Communication Technology

**Location:** Armonk, USA

**Size:** +250 employees

### Challenges:

- Lack of opportunities for underserved communities to access tech education
- Misalignments between traditional education offerings and market needs
- Employers need to rely in the main on traditional four-year degree qualifications when hiring graduates

### Solution:

**P-TECH** is a public education model, developed by IBM and educators. It provides high school and secondary school students from underserved communities with the **academic, technical, and professional skills and credentials** they need for competitive STEM jobs.

P-TECH schools are open and free for students. They are **partnerships between a second-level school, a third-level college or university, and industry partners** working together. The model combines **coursework with workplace experiences** like industry mentoring, worksite visits, traineeships and first-in-line for job considerations with a school's company partner.

Free, digital learning is also available through "[SkillsBuild](#)", which introduces students and educators to tech skills, from emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and cybersecurity, to new ways of working like agile and design thinking.



In Ireland, the P-TECH initiative has been adapted to the Irish Education system. The government launched the programme in 2018 which is implemented as part of the Dublin North East Inner City (NEIC) Initiative to oversee the long-term social and economic regeneration of the area. Piloting P-TECH Irish schools include Larkin Community College, Marino College, and St Joseph's CBS, Dublin partnering with the National College of Ireland, IBM, Cisco, Virgin Media, Irish Water, and Irish Life.

The independent **NEIC Programme Implementation Board** (PIB), composed of government departments and agencies, is tasked with the **delivery of key services and accountability for the expenditure of funds** related to NEIC project priority areas. **Four working subgroups**, each including community and business sector representatives, have been established in line with these priority areas and assigned relevant actions.

### Results:

As of January 2021, there are **200 P-TECH schools across 11 US states and 28 countries**. IBM has provided **500 paid traineeships** to students (as of January 2020).

Graduates obtain **both second and third-level qualifications** (EQF level 5). To date, **339 students graduated** from the programme (started in 2011). Among them, **thirty-six were hired by schools' company partners** into full-time positions directly after graduating.

### Key benefits:

- Strong commitment from students who are engaged by the curriculum, mentoring, and workplace experiences
- Graduates are immediately able to assume roles with the industry partners or continue their education

### Key resources:

- A P-TECH coordinator (part-time) for both industry and school partners
- P-TECH ["Blueprint"](#) (curated guide of resources) to establish, implement, and advance the P-TECH model
- Upskilling training for second-level teachers to deliver the curriculum
- Collaboration between national education systems, IBM, schools, third-level institutions, and industry partners

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