... it is worth pursuing the base of access...

The STC course isn't... prepared for the work and exams that we have to face when completing a tertiary course. (STC student)

The hard work, and the amount of it, that was going on as I was doing this work, had me very well for my science course, as I was able to cope with my workload this year. (STC student)

The lack of being presented with extra-curricular material on a subject is also a drawback for the prospective university student. Naturally, subjects at university are dealt with on a higher level, usually at a level for students who have previously done the HSC (former HSC student). It is easy to feel isolated in the new dimensions of knowledge on familiar subjects. (STC student)

Post STC students identified particular areas of study which helped prepare them for tertiary education, such as, negotiation of course work, experience, a curriculum which was relevant to their future study needs.

STC helped me confirm what course of study I wanted to undertake. It gave me an opportunity to investigate my preferred chosen career, develop the skills I needed for further study, and study a topic in depth. Most of all I found that the flexibility and independence was to my advantage compared to previous studies. I entered STC as a starting point to a career in psychology, and because I achieved all my goals in STC, I gained entry into the course and situation that had as my first preference. (STC student)

I feel that the opportunity to be able to work in the particular fields I was interested in (this course primary primary language development) was significant. The STC helped me develop the language that was useful to me, so when I wanted to pursue a career, but due to the good references and references of the language, I was able to make decisions that were right for me. (STC student)

The STC helped me to acquire the academic language for a tertiary students. As a result, I feel that the STC was an important part of my academic development so that their exiting Year 12 students will be prepared and equipped to face the challenges of higher education.

The Student progress and performance study 1975-1988

The Student Progress and Performance Study (SPSS) was established at the Australian National University with the support of the first data collection in 1975. The impetus behind gathering student data was to attempt to identify the causes and to suggest policy formulations to reduce the high attrition rates seen in the 1960s. In these earlier years approximately one third of all undergraduate students failed to complete their studies. This has increased to over half of all students. (ANU student)

The rate of withdrawal from all units was not appreciably different between government and private schools.

There is of course some considerable overlap in most cases in that studies may extend over a number of studies, the academic achievement and ANU performance, in general, is linked to the factors of students' personal characteristics are associated with the withdrawal of students. An overall view of the data is given in Table 1 (Appendix B) where each SPSS course is numbered and coded into this overall analysis.

The data on the relationship between the Student Progress and Performance Study up to 1978 were written by Bennett and Mitchell (SPSS 14) and Miller (SPSS 5). The latter report considered some of the implications of the findings of the SPSS study. The following data were taken primarily from the ANU student. The four main results from these meetings were as follows:

1. The University may wish to consider making greater use of diagnostic tests to identify any lack in students' key writing skills among incoming first year students.

2. During Orientation Week, students should be given more information on resource and support services available, including the Study Skills Unit, the ANU Library and academic stuff.

3. Marked differences in academic backgrounds of entering students were attributed to the range of courses available in Years 11 and 12 of tertiary schools in the ACT, NSW and other States. A more generalised and flexible first year, at least a six course block based on secondary school studies, was therefore suggested. (ANU student)

4. Although the rate of withdrawals and non-completion was from students who had previously completed tertiary courses elsewhere. The informal working party concluded that some of the students had underestimated the difficulties of undertaking further studies and it was suggested that course advisors should discuss the implications of this with such students.

External publications have been rare, mostly because of the confidentiality of the reports and often due to the study being specific to the ANU. It is also the case that the main impetus was to provide data on any one of the institutions. The completion of the academic achievement and ANU performance, in general, is linked to the factors of students' personal characteristics are associated with the withdrawal of students. An overall view of the data is given in Table 1 (Appendix B) where each SPSS course is numbered and coded into this overall analysis.

The data on the relationship between the Student Progress and Performance Study up to 1978 were written by Bennett and Mitchell (SPSS 14) and Miller (SPSS 5). The latter report considered some of the implications of the findings of the SPSS study. The following data were taken primarily from the ANU student. The four main results from these meetings were as follows:

1. The University may wish to consider making greater use of diagnostic tests to identify any lack in students' key writing skills among incoming first year students.

2. During Orientation Week, students should be given more information on resource and support services available, including the Study Skills Unit, the ANU Library and academic stuff.

3. Marked differences in academic backgrounds of entering students were attributed to the range of courses available in Years 11 and 12 of tertiary schools in the ACT, NSW and other States. A more generalised and flexible first year, at least a six course block based on secondary school studies, was therefore suggested. (ANU student)

4. Although the rate of withdrawals and non-completion was from students who had previously completed tertiary courses elsewhere. The informal working party concluded that some of the students had underestimated the difficulties of undertaking further studies and it was suggested that course advisors should discuss the implications of this with such students.

External publications have been rare, mostly because of the confidentiality of the reports and often due to the study being specific to the ANU. It is also the case that the main impetus was to provide data on any one of the institutions. The completion of the academic achievement and ANU performance, in general, is linked to the factors of students' personal characteristics are associated with the withdrawal of students. An overall view of the data is given in Table 1 (Appendix B) where each SPSS course is numbered and coded into this overall analysis.

The data on the relationship between the Student Progress and Performance Study up to 1978 were written by Bennett and Mitchell (SPSS 14) and Miller (SPSS 5). The latter report considered some of the implications of the findings of the SPSS study. The following data were taken primarily from the ANU student. The four main results from these meetings were as follows:

1. The University may wish to consider making greater use of diagnostic tests to identify any lack in students' key writing skills among incoming first year students.

2. During Orientation Week, students should be given more information on resource and support services available, including the Study Skills Unit, the ANU Library and academic stuff.

3. Marked differences in academic backgrounds of entering students were attributed to the range of courses available in Years 11 and 12 of tertiary schools in the ACT, NSW and other States. A more generalised and flexible first year, at least a six course block based on secondary school studies, was therefore suggested. (ANU student)

4. Although the rate of withdrawals and non-completion was from students who had previously completed tertiary courses elsewhere. The informal working party concluded that some of the students had underestimated the difficulties of undertaking further studies and it was suggested that course advisors should discuss the implications of this with such students.

External publications have been rare, mostly because of the confidentiality of the reports and often due to the study being specific to the ANU. It is also the case that the main impetus was to provide data on only one of the institutions. The completion of the academic achievement and ANU performance, in general, is linked to the factors of students' personal characteristics are associated with the withdrawal of students. An overall view of the data is given in Table 1 (Appendix B) where each SPSS course is numbered and coded into this overall analysis.

The data on the relationship between the Student Progress and Performance Study up to 1978 were written by Bennett and Mitchell (SPSS 14) and Miller (SPSS 5). The latter report considered some of the implications of the findings of the SPSS study. The following data were taken primarily from the ANU student. The four main results from these meetings were as follows:

1. The University may wish to consider making greater use of diagnostic tests to identify any lack in students' key writing skills among incoming first year students.

2. During Orientation Week, students should be given more information on resource and support services available, including the Study Skills Unit, the ANU Library and academic stuff.

3. Marked differences in academic backgrounds of entering students were attributed to the range of courses available in Years 11 and 12 of tertiary schools in the ACT, NSW and other States. A more generalised and flexible first year, at least a six course block based on secondary school studies, was therefore suggested. (ANU student)
The ANU part-time (PT) undergraduate population between 1974-1978 was examined by Watkins, Smit and Moreton (SPS 28). During this time, the number of postgraduate students increased, but the number of PT degrees were not falling. The student body was still growing in terms of numbers.

First-year performance was compared between government and private schools in the period from 1971-1977 (Moreton and Smit, SPS 11). The study found that students from private schools had a significantly higher Grade Point Average (GPA) than those from government schools. However, when the students entered university, the GPA of students from government schools increased to a degree that was not significantly different between government and private schools. This suggests that students from government schools may have had a higher enrollment rate or a better academic performance in their secondary education.

University Experience

An investigation of persisting students' views of their first year at ANU was reported in SPS 19 (Watkins, Smit and Moreton, 1991). The factors most frequently reported were: confidence, energy/stamina, essay writing, and ability to communicate with other students. The study concluded that the most important reason for persisting was the ability to cope with the demands of university life. The study also found that the majority of students were satisfied with their decision to attend ANU and that they would recommend ANU to others.

Student Withdrawal

A study by Watkins, Smit and Moreton (SPS 25) examined the reasons for student withdrawal from ANU. The study found that the most common reasons for withdrawal were: personal reasons (including illness), financial reasons, and academic reasons. The study also found that students who withdrew from ANU were more likely to have lower GPAs and lower income than those who remained.

Academic Performance

The SPS 28 report (Benett and Mortimer) examined the academic performance of students from government and private schools. The study found that students from government schools had a significantly higher mean GPA than those from private schools. This suggests that government schools may be more effective in preparing students for university studies.

Employment Outcomes

A study by Watkins, Smit and Moreton (SPS 27) examined the employment outcomes of ANU graduates. The study found that graduates from government schools were more likely to find employment than those from private schools. This suggests that government schools may be more effective in preparing students for the job market.

Previous Academic Achievement

The SPS 3 report (Benett and Mortimer) examined the academic achievement of ANU students. The study found that students from government schools had a significantly higher mean GPA than those from private schools. This suggests that government schools may be more effective in preparing students for university studies.

The SPS 28 report (Benett and Mortimer) examined the academic performance of students from government and private schools. The study found that students from government schools had a significantly higher mean GPA than those from private schools. This suggests that government schools may be more effective in preparing students for university studies.
... "housewives" are a relatively unappreciated pool of latent demand for higher education.

From 1974 to 1978 when they represented 6% of the undergraduate population, "housewives" completion rates were lower than those of their full-time or part-time (SM) counterparts but the percentage of these "housewives" who were at least 25 and apparently lower than other students with full-time work commitments. This latter group probably provides a better comparison with "housewives" since it may be argued that housework can be a full-time job. The percentage of pass at or above distinction level was higher than other comparable student groups from 1974-1977. In 1977 the percentage of "housewives" gaining distinction was slightly below that of SM students. In summary, the authors of SPPS 12 concluded that "housewives" are a relatively unappreciated pool of latent demand for higher education. A further report on the "housewives" entrants in addition to SPPS 12 can be found in SPPS 16 which was presented at the Academic, Vocational, and Educational Committee. The first year performance of 1976 entrants who were admitted under the special admission requirements is reported by SPPS (7A). In 1977 the ANU initiated the Special Adult Entry Scheme (SAES). This was for students who were at least 25 who could enter the ANU by reaching an appropriate standard on a modified ALE test sitting as an essay. This first cohort entered the ANU in 1979 and their performance and progress was compared with other undergraduate cohorts. SAES students withdrawal rates were higher than PT students but they had a higher percentage of passes at distinction and above than AXT school leavers. In summary, the report concludes that both the SAES and the early adult entry schemes (for school leavers) were very worthwhile in terms of the academic performance of these groups at the ANU.

A report on the impressions of first year ANU lecturers of their students’ English competence was carried out by Sko (December 1985). This was commissioned by the Dean of Arts and, although it was not designed for analysis of the SPPS series, it nonetheless dealt with related issues, albeit from the perspective of lecturers rather than students. A particular concern of reported weak areas in English usage was marked more by respondents to first year foreign language skills. Specific areas of weakness which were identified were written expression, oral expression, listening and reading comprehension. Most respondents who reported weaknesses in English also reported that the lecturer were markedly detrimental to performance in these subjects. The likelihood that problems in English have negative effects on general academic performance was greater for Arts respondents than for Science, who in turn, are more likely to have problems in non-English arts-Commerce-Computer fields. A study examining the relationships between AXT and ALE success with academic performance in first year units was undertaken by Sakk and Morisson (SPPS 17B). This study was based on the ACT school leaver entrants to the ANU in 1979. The TES was found to correlate with first year units but the correlation varied according to type of course. The maximum correlation reached 0.876 with first year Geography but with all other units, there was a wide variation between courses and even within course units (eg History 1A, 1B, 1C). However, the differences in sample sizes confounded the differences between units. In addition sample sizes were insufficient for most of the units. The TES seemed to be a superior predictor of first year performance than the AXT, but the results were marked variations in this generalization.

A final study that examined the possibility of increasing the predictive power of the TES in explaining first year grades in one large faculty was given in SPPS 30. This was a theoretical and statistical paper which was empirically based. In short, although the TES is a predictor of first year grades, it can be improved upon. The addition of the mean science grades from year 12 secondary school ACT certificate (HSC) can improve the prediction for Science and Biology subjects by 7%. With other cohorts, the prediction may be improved by some 40% by the addition of supplementary or independent HSC variables into a linear equation. The paper argued that the done against the uncorrected and uncorrected results and found that empirical evidence not only to bedazzle this assumption but also show how the inclusion of these dimensional predictors can have superior predictive power. The analysis was predominantly by variance partitioning with multiple regression techniques. Conclusion

A considerable amount of information has been gathered by the SPPS programme over the last 13 years which has addressed many of the issues met by ANU students. The SPPS programme has added information in relation to four main interrelated areas including: demographic changes, student performance at university as measured by passes or withdrawal, ANU students’ experiences and expectations, and students’ previous academic achievement before entering the ANU. Much of this data was quite complex in nature, especially when the results, were analysed by gender and Faculty. A very brief summary is given above showing the results, were derived from analyses that have been largely addressed by the SPPS programme.

Although the regular collection of data has been discontinued from 1984, the SPPS programme remains a permanent constituent record for those interested in such questions in special admissions procedures or student selection. It is possible from the SPPS files to gather further data in order to answer specific questions at some future time if requested to do so. Any such work would benefit from the large amount of background information already gathered in the SPPS files.

References to published work


Appendix A

STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS STUDY: PAPERS


Appendix B

Table 1 — SPPS studies by group and number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>University Performance</th>
<th>University Experience</th>
<th>Previous Academic Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) Pass</td>
<td>(B) Withdrawal</td>
<td>(C) Number</td>
<td>(D) Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 uses the same numbering for each study as listed in Appendix A.