

# PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS FOR FIRST YEAR CHEMISTRY STUDIES

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## ABSTRACT

The first-year of university is a challenging time where students are navigating and creating the balance between learning new academic skills and obtaining social and independent living skills. A successful transition into university is highly dependent on students' academic preparedness. The findings of this research aim to demonstrate the impact perception of preparedness might have on student success in first-year chemistry units. We anticipate the interpretation of this data will be used to inform future teaching methods in Monash University.

This presentation will showcase some of the findings from the analysis of pre- and post-semester survey responses and a series of teaching staff interviews and student focus groups. For example, of 846 first-year chemistry student responses to an online questionnaire, 88% had prior chemistry knowledge, but just 34% considered themselves prepared for university chemistry. It was also found that students with prior chemistry knowledge had a more positive perception towards university studies compared to students who have not had prior experience with chemistry. Open-ended responses revealed that difficulties with the mathematical aspects of chemistry was an important theme. The comparison between the online questionnaires and interviews produced some interesting findings juxtaposing perceptions of students and educators.

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