THE MATHEMATICS ACADEMIC PLANNER: RAISING AWARENESS OF ASSUMED KNOWLEDGE, PROMOTING HELP-SEEKING, AND SUPPORTING DEGREE PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

Mathematics entry requirements at university continue to be relaxed as institutions seek to address declining interests in STEM courses and increase the diversity of their student cohorts. One approach taken is to replace prerequisites with notions of 'assumed knowledge' which can often be vague and mystifying to the student. Inevitably, this gives rise to several challenges, including a rising proportion of students who may be unaware they are entering university mathematically underprepared for their studies.

This project outlines an initiative to implement an institutional wide mathematics diagnostic tool built using the University of Sydney's Student Relationship and Engagement System (SRES) for students to inform subject choice and degree planning, by checking their prior understanding against the assumed knowledge requirements of key subjects in their chosen degree path and linking them with appropriate support. We describe the outcomes from an initial pilot and conclude with reflections for possible expansion in view of recent governmental requirements to demonstrate adequate early and pro-active support for their students.

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