

# STAR (STUDENT TRANSITION & RETENTION) IN CHEMISTRY – ASSESSING STUDENT PREPARATION, PERFORMANCE, CHALLENGES AND PROGRESSION IN FIRST YEAR CHEMISTRY AT CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT

This talk will present data on three years of first semester chemistry student performance and examine characteristics of student behaviours that appear to contribute to poor student performance. A dramatic decrease in student failure rates this year will be analysed.

- Chemistry 1A has between 550-700 students each autumn, dispersed over five cohorts and two campuses at Charles Sturt University (CSU). It caters for approximately 20-25 courses at CSU. It is offered via internal (IE) and distance education (DE)
- From 2011-2013 26-29% of students from low socioeconomic status background.
- Anecdotally students who have poor math skills (from high school) tend to perform poorly compared to students who have higher levels of math skills.
- DE students continue to underperform compared to IE students
- One of the biggest concerns is engaging the students as early as possible and to be consistent with their weekly progress through the topics covered.
- Failing students fail to submit assignments: Students who fail to submit an assignment, worth approximately 5% of their mark, show an average drop in their total score of 15% per missed assignment.

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