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**Trends in the mathematical competency of university entrants in Ireland by leaving certificate mathematics grade.**

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Summary: This article reports on the mathematical competency of students entering third-level education in the University of Limerick (UL). Data from diagnostic testing, gathered on 5,949 students between the years 1998 and 2008, are used to demonstrate the changes in competency levels of students entering UL. There has been a significant decline in the performance of students in the diagnostic test over time. The performance, on average, of students with the same leaving certificate mathematics grade on entry into university has not changed significantly over time. However, the profile of the entrants has changed considerably and this is contributing to the overall decline in mathematical competency.

*Classification:* D65 D75

*Keywords:* diagnostic testing; knowledge level; universities

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