

**ZMATH 2010d.00301**

**Gill, Olivia; O'Donoghue, John; Faulkner, Fiona; Hannigan, Ailish**

**Trends in performance of science and technology students (1997–2008) in Ireland.**

Int. J. Math. Educ. Sci. Technol. 41, No. 3, 323-339 (2010).

Summary: *D.N. Hunt* and *D. A. Lawson* [Teach. Math. Appl. 15, 167–173 (1996)] displayed the evidence of decline in the mathematical standards of first-year students in Coventry University between 1991 and 1995. *O. Gill* sought to investigate if this was also the case in the University of Limerick. The results of diagnostic tests administered to first-year undergraduates in the science and technology groups (service mathematics courses) between 1997 and 2002 displayed the evidence that the mathematical standard of students entering the University of Limerick's service mathematics courses had declined over the 6 years studied. In this article, the authors revisit the University of Limerick's database, which currently holds data for over 6200 students, to investigate current mathematical entry standards of students in service mathematics courses. The University of Limerick's responses to the 'Mathematics Problem' are also described. Ireland presents a unique situation in terms of the mathematical homogeneity of its third-level students; most students enter via the same route, i.e. the Leaving Certificate, on completion of 13 years of formal mathematics education. However, while research results and coping mechanisms in terms of learning support are not generalizable, they are portable. It is hoped that mathematics educators worldwide can learn from the Irish situation.

*Classification:* D64 D65

*Keywords:* mathematical entry standards; first year students; service mathematics courses; diagnostic testing; empirical investigations; mathematics learning centre

doi:10.1080/00207390903477426