

ASSESSING AND ADDRESSING THE HIGH FAIL RATES ACROSS THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE

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The reasons students fail a given university course are almost as diverse as the student populations themselves. While not an exhaustive list, students may fail due to:

- coming from a low socioeconomic (Zembrodt, 2021),
- experiencing significant physical or mental health (Eisenberg et al., 2009),
- struggling to deal with the transition to university life (McGhie, 2017),
- overcommitting to work and study hours (Lowe & Gayle, 2007), and/or,
- becoming disengaged with study or non-attending class / the university in general (Hockings et al., 2008).

Recent data shows that the Faculty of Science has one of the highest student fail (FA) rates at the university alongside a high number of students not participating overall (i.e. 'ghost' students). This is especially true in the 1000 level units, and amongst minority groups.

What is particularly unknown now, however, is which of the aforementioned factors that can lead to student failure, if any, are at play in the high science FA rates. It would seem that there is a systemic issue (or set thereof) which impacts science units uniquely. As such, this project seeks to first understand why the FA rates are higher in science. To achieve this, a group of 7 first-year coordinators (including the project lead) will undertake a systemic review and investigation into the issue. This workshop will ask the audience to critique the current plan to undertake this investigation and will provide some initial findings from the University of Sydney.

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