

# **The First Year Experience in Second Year: Pathway College versus University Direct Entry**

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## *Abstract*

There are a growing number of international and local students entering university programs in the second year of the degree program after transitioning through a pathway provider. In Australia the term “pathway provider” is used to refer to partnerships between universities and (generally) private, for-profit higher education colleges providing Diploma programs as a “pathway” for students to enter the second year of a university program. There is no one clear definition for the term “pathway provider”, the naming convention is unclear and there is no one agreed upon term for these institutions. There is, however, significant data on the growth of this industry and its benefits to the economy, its enhancement of cultural diversity on university campuses, the potential for internationalisation of the curriculum and a welcome addition to university revenue. It is estimated that 60% of international students in higher education have come from some form of pathway provider. While research has examined the first year experience of University students in some depth, differences between the experiences of a pathway students to direct entry first year university students requires further investigation. The purpose of this investigation is to determine the extent of difference between students completing the first year of their degree program at a pathway provider compared to direct entry at a University and the subsequent impact on the pathway student’s results at the second year level.

## *Keywords*

Pathway provider, second year, student experience, pass rates