

PERFORMANCE IN LAW SCHOOL: WHAT MATTERS IN THE BEGINNING?

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Abstract

This paper offers insight into some of the factors beyond previous academic achievement that may influence the performance of undergraduate Law students in Australia. A survey of interests, attitudes and expectations was conducted with commencing LLB students at the Melbourne Law School in 2007. The paper reports on the survey responses of students who went on to achieve very high marks in their first semester, students who achieved very low marks and students who did not complete first semester. Significant differences between the performance subgroups were identified regarding initial levels of interest in studying law, expectations of workload and academic support, and confidence in 'readiness' to undertake a range of academic tasks. These findings have implications for Law School selection committees, first year teachers, and staff involved in orientation and academic support programs. Better information for prospective students about the nature and demands of a Law course is also indicated.

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