

**Is Matric Math a Good Predictor of Student's Performance
in the First Year of University Degree?
A Case Study of Faculty of Management Studies,
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

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ABSTRACT Ordinarily speaking the performance of students at the first year commerce degree is related to matric total score and other socio-demographic variables. This study asserts that, since mathematical proficiency is a special skill that is necessary for commerce degree, matric (National Senior Certificate, NSC) math score is the key variable which significantly determines the pass rates in the first year university modules. The study tests this hypothesis with the new set of data for the University of KwaZulu-Natal with the help of an econometric model. Empirical results support the hypothesis and the study suggests some far-reaching policy implications for increasing pass rate and student retention in the commerce degree programs in South Africa.