

The Academic Performance of Directly-Admitted Students

This study examined how well directly-admitted (DA) students perform relative to undergraduate students admitted through the Center for Preparatory Studies (CPS).

The sample included 2139 students admitted to undergraduate programs from 2012 to 2015. Transfer students and students who completed a foundation program outside NU were excluded. DA students accounted for 10.5% of the sample. We used propensity score matching and regression analysis to examine the relationship between admission type and academic performance during the first two years of undergraduate study.

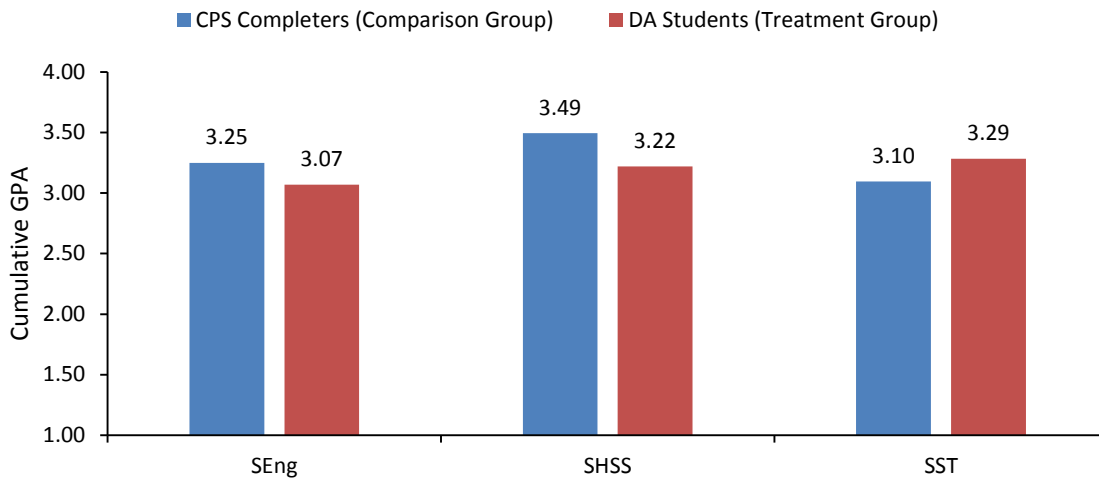
Results suggest that the relationship between admission type and academic performance depends on students' undergraduate school. Figure 1 summarizes key findings and indicates that DA students in SEng had lower term GPA in the first term. However, they performed just as well as CPS completers in subsequent terms.

	<i>Term 1</i>	<i>Term 2</i>	<i>Term 3</i>	<i>Term 4</i>
SEng	DA < CPS	DA = CPS	DA = CPS	DA = CPS
SHSS	DA = CPS	DA < CPS	DA = CPS	DA < CPS
SST	DA > CPS	DA > CPS	DA > CPS	DA > CPS

- Red:** DA students' GPA was lower compared to CPS students' GPA
- Yellow:** DA students' GPA was higher compared to CPS students' GPA
- Green:** DA students' GPA did not differ from CPS students' GPA

Within SHSS, the two groups did not differ in academic performance in the first and third terms. However, DA students had lower term GPA in the second and fourth terms. As for SST, DA students within this school performed consistently better compared to their CPS counterparts.

Adjusted Cumulative GPA, End of Second Year (Figure 2)



Results also suggest that at the end of the first and second year, DA students' cumulative GPA was lower in SEng and SHSS but higher in SST. Figure 2 provides an illustration for second-year cumulative GPA. These statistically significant differences, in second-year cumulative GPA, were small-to-medium (in terms of magnitude) in SEng and SST and large in SHSS.

These findings raise several implications for both admission policy and academic support. Some of these implications were articulated in the expanded version the study report (available upon request). We invite stakeholders to reflect upon and consider these implications. A key question for reflection could be: What do these findings mean for (1) admission policy, (2) CPS preparation, and (3) academic support at undergraduate levels?

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