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Student profile of the College of Chemical Sciences, Institute of Chemistry, 2012

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The Institute of Chemistry Ceylon is the largest provider of Graduate Chemists in Sri Lanka since 1996. With the 30th batch passing out it received accreditation from the Royal Society of Chemistry in 2012. The total cumulative output increased to 905 Graduate Chemists. The student population increased from 270 in 2007 to 387 in 2012. Data of the current student population was analyzed viz. age, gender, place of residence, employment and students' performance at GCE A/L and O/L examinations. Information was obtained using a questionnaire, from students of all levels including a batch that graduated. 282 responses were received.

78% of students are from the age group 21 to 25 years. Overall female population is 70%. 75% live in the Western Province, followed by 9.9% in the Central Province. The number of students following other educational programmes simultaneously is 59%. Number of students employed shows a drop, from 15.4 to 10.8% compared to the previous year. However, a large number of graduating students have found employment, proving that the Graduateship programme is a well recognized professional qualification. 94.32% have followed the local GCE O/L syllabus and 5.67% have followed the London O/L syllabus. 94% have followed the local GCE A/L syllabus, and 6% have followed the GCE A/L London. Academic performance at GCE A/L - 1 or more A grades 10-12%, no A's just B's & C's only 30-41, no A's or B's, only C's & S's 36-52%, and simple passes only 6-12%. Generally, students who followed the local syllabus have better results at the O/L than at the A/L. The trend is reversed for London syllabus students, as they have comparatively lower grades at the O/L but tend to get more A grades at the A/L. 89% followed biological sciences at A/L. 44% of the students joined the programme after sitting the A/L examination at least twice.

The findings indicate that the programme continues to attract a diverse population of students and has provided a second chance to many who were otherwise deprived of the opportunity to pursue higher studies on account of their performance at the GCE A/L. This programme has also offered the opportunity to university students to complete a chemistry honours programme at least one year earlier than in the traditional universities.