

Liberal Studies in Science at Manchester, did his share of that in 1966, when the department was started. In 1966 there were thirteen students who had originally applied or were already in the traditional science departments. Last year there were ninety-three applicants, some again from the traditional departments, for eighteen places. This year a hundred applications were made direct and the academic standard of those accepted compares well with students in the other science departments. What is more, this summer the other great obstacle to recruitment, namely the fear of potential students that employers will fight shy of people graduating from a general science course, seems to have been disposed of. Twenty-seven of the thirty-two first and second year students took vacation jobs from no less than 171 offers from companies and public corporations and several of them have, on the strength of their summer's work, been offered jobs as soon as they graduate and apparently most of the companies were very enthusiastic about the quality of the students.

Professor Jevons says business is thriving. What is the successful formula? Insisting on high calibre students from the very start (GCE A-level grades of a B and two Cs including physics and mathematics are the usual requirements) is perhaps the most important factor. But the course which has attracted these students is a judicious blend over three years of economics, history of science, biological and physical sciences, mathematics and science policy, obviously a very different approach to generalist science from that adopted at Stirling. The department is now about to apply to the SRC for funds for a postgraduate course to start next year and to cater for graduates from the conventional science departments. Judging from the SRC's latest policy statement (see page 216), there should be little difficulty in getting the money. But being copied is the best evidence of success, and at Sussex there is talk, at the postgraduate Unit for the Study of Science Policy, of setting up an undergraduate course along the lines of that at Manchester.

Neither the Manchester nor Stirling courses have accepted any arts sixth formers although Manchester is trying to decide how best to do this and at Stirling the only essential requirement is A-level mathematics. The university says it will teach science to any arts applicant with this qualification but, perhaps fortunately, no one has taken up its offer yet. At Bath, however, the one year postgraduate course in the Sociology of Science, directed by Professor Cotgrove, is designed for sociologists although there is a preliminary year's conversion course to introduce scientists and engineers to the ways of sociology. The whole project, however, is on the point of collapse because only two people have enrolled in its first two years. Unless it gets off the ground next year, which must seem unlikely, Professor Cotgrove says the university will have to stop the course or alternatively, if anything comes of current discussions with industry, change it into a course for industrial scientists likely to move into administration.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Swing Back to Science

Is the swing in the popularity of British university courses from science to arts and social science courses

a continuing trend, or has the attention recently devoted to the problem been effective in arresting the swing? At the beginning of the new academic year, the general opinion seems to be that the number of applicants for science places as a fraction of the total number of applicants is much the same as it was last year, and that at least it is not decreasing as much as might have been feared. There is even some evidence of a swing back to the sciences among school children now entering sixth forms.

The number of places available at universities is determined principally by the amount of money the University Grants Committee (UGC) can be persuaded to part with, and this in turn depends on the demand for places in previous years and on existing long-term plans for expansion. Cuts have forced Exeter University, for instance, to reduce quotas for admissions to science departments by 10 per cent this year. Elsewhere, quotas for admission to science faculties are about the same as last year, and usually they seem to have been filled. Some universities admit that if more science places were available, they might have some difficulty in filling them without lowering standards.

A parameter used as a measure of the relative popularities of various courses is the ratio of the number of applications to the number of available places for various subjects. This is not a particularly meaningful statistic because the number of applications includes all applications, irrespective of their quality, but it does give some indication of general trends. At Sussex University this year the ratio is 21 for arts subjects and 13 for science subjects—ranging from 21 for biochemistry, through psychology, applied sciences, physics, chemistry and biology to 8 for mathematics. Last year, the ratios were 9.5 for science subjects and 21 for arts subjects. The fact that the number of arts applications is not rising as rapidly as was expected may be explained by some degree of pre-selection at schools, where children are warned that the competition for arts places is fierce. At Birmingham, the number of applicants per science place is 11 this year, compared with 12 last year, and for arts places is 19 this year.

Some of the least popular courses at the older universities are the engineering courses—perhaps a result of the increasing intake of students to the newer technological universities. These, however, appear still to have some difficulty in recruitment. Newer courses, such as biochemistry and computer science, seem to be increasingly attractive. In line with current sensitivity about early specialization, combined honours courses, according to Professor D. J. E. Ingram of Keele University, are becoming more and more popular generally.

SALARIES

Who's Paid What

THE five British science institutes have completed salary surveys of their members, and the preliminary results are published as a supplement to *Chemistry in Britain*. The median salaries by age group for each institute are compared in Table 1. Fellows and associates tend to have better degrees and longer experience than licentiates or graduates.