Why is diversity of offerings important

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Diversity of offerings in higher education matters because students, employers and communities do not all need the same kind of education. A strong portfolio should offer meaningful choice - not simply more courses. A well thought through (strategic and sensible) approach to diversity of offerings is key.

Key considerations that are worth exploring -

Different student goals

Offerings should accommodate students/people seeking an initial qualification, a career change, professional development or a pathway into research related areas. Students need opportunities at all levels of their career and professional development. My own institution – (SISTC) currently offers a Bachelors' degree in IT; A Graduate Certificate in IT; Multiple Masters' level awards in IT, Education and Business Administration.

Access and flexibility

Diversity can include qualification levels, entry pathways and delivery modes - *not only subject areas*. The aim is to make participation accessible for students with different circumstances and at different stages of their development/careers.

Workforce relevance

A varied (diverse) portfolio allows institutions to address different professional needs. For example, a number of institutions are preparing Secondary-teaching courses explicitly responding to a demand for educators in STEM and high-need teaching areas. This relevance of offerings is critical. The increase at both bachelor and masters' level early childhood education across the sector, again, has a focus on a professional niche and demand area.

Progression opportunities

Students should have routes to deepen their expertise rather than reach a qualification dead end. The notion of 'access and egress' are important parts of diversity offerings and thinking.

Institutional resilience

Strategically, a broader portfolio can reduce dependence on a single discipline or student market - but this is only if the additional offerings are viable and well supported.

Diversity must be purposeful. It should be balanced against teaching expertise, resources, academic quality and institutional mission. The research proposal itself links expansion to staff expertise and measured development.

The goal of diversity is not to offer everything - it is to offer a coherent range of high-quality options that serve different needs.

Also worth reading –

Multiple products, multiple locations and multiple modes of delivery – the way forward (2025) - 6113ad_26dd3f1b903a47108787ec29badb7b4d.pdf

Diversification and associated risk taking (2025) - 6113ad_7c082a9805854a2c87febbcced619a31.pdf

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