

Why did we do this? Additional offerings of Engineering and Built Environment degrees over multiple campuses.

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Engineering roles are expected to rise by almost 20% in the next five years according to the Australian Government's Industry Employment Predictions 2015 Report. In the near future Western Sydney will see a large engineering and construction boom with the creation of the Badgerys Creek Airport, the Science Corridor and focus of Parramatta as a second CBD. Additionally, federal government funding for infrastructure to the area is 2.9 million over 10 years. To take advantage of the industry demand and to increase the market share of perspective students, Western Sydney University has increased offerings for these degrees over multiple campuses. Previously only on Penrith campus, Construction Management is now also offered at Parramatta campus, and Engineering degrees at both Parramatta and the new Sydney City campus in 2017.

Multi-campus delivery provides greater flexibility for students and is an attractive characteristic that the current and future students demand. However, technical subjects like engineering are more difficult to establish due to the equipment and spaces required for practical laboratories and technical staffing requirements. As engineering degrees are expensive to set up and operate, most universities will run these degrees on one campus only. Increasing these offerings has created some problems including increased workload of academic staff, equipment costs and availability, accreditation considerations and cannibalisation of existing offerings. We have examined solutions to these problems such as using webinars, flipped classroom strategies, streaming lectures and virtual laboratories.

From an economic rationalist point of view, this costly endeavour would probably not pass a cost-benefit analysis in the first two of years of delivery. However, with expected population growth to reach 3 million by 2036, as well as growth of peri-urban spaces in the Greater Western Sydney region, placing these degrees in Parramatta is a strategically important decision both financially and socially.