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Abstract

Liberalising the arts & sciences in a traditionally narrow educational model: Recent English adaptations of the liberal educational model and future directions – Lessons for China

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One of the challenges of introducing a liberal arts (& sciences) education into a new country is the limitations of the students' previous educational experience, and their and their families expectations of a university degree. This can restrict the extent to which a university might seek to pursue some 'ideal' liberal-arts model or constrain what can be achieved within the timescale of the students' university experience. This paper outlines some of the challenges faced by English universities which have recently attempted to introduce new degrees which allow more flexibility than the traditional single-honours model, how they have attempted to overcome these challenges within the constraints of a market-driven system, and the extent to which these new degrees can be called 'liberal arts (and sciences)'. The paper concludes by attempting to draw lessons for the introduction of liberal arts (& sciences) model in China.