

University Programmes in Software Development

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Abstract

Programmes in "Software Engineering" have become a source of contention in many universities. Computer Science departments, many of which have used the phrase "Software Engineering" to describe individual courses for decades, claim software engineering as part of Computer Science. Some Engineering faculties claim "Software Engineering" as a new member of a growing family of engineering disciplines. Other organisations seem to view "Software Engineering" as a Management discipline. These different viewpoints result in programmes that differ widely in their style and content.

Any organisation thinking of starting a "Software Engineering Programme" at the University or Technical University level must begin by recognising that the term "Software Engineering" has been used so carelessly that it is almost meaningless. To design a meaningful educational programme, one must understand the alternative meanings of the phrase and choose a consistent viewpoint.

The talk will describe the main alternatives. Each is based on a different interpretation and vision of what the graduates will do. Some of them require students capable of doing well in a traditional university education. Others do not constitute a university education but the graduates should work under the supervision of university educated people. All can be useful if they are not confused with each other.