

Government and higher education: the approach to regulation

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Abstract (1)

- Introduction
- The structure of UK higher education
- Regulation: the wider context
- The regulation of higher education in the UK
- The basis of regulation of higher education: knights or knaves, queens or pawns
- What are we trying to achieve?

Abstract (2)

- Knights or knaves: the view from inside
- Knights or knaves: the view from outside
- Queens or pawns: the role of students
- Regulatory systems for European higher education
- Conclusion

Introduction

- State and HE: the changing relationship
- The devolution of public services
- The growth of regulation

The structure of UK higher education

- Autonomy
- The extent of state control
- Arms-length funding: the Funding Councils

Regulation: the wider context

- The end of state ownership
- Privatisation and quasi-markets
- The regulators
- The attack on the professions
- A decline in trust
- The rise of the audit society
- The rights of consumers

The regulation of HE in the UK: recent trends

- Quality assurance
- Research assessment
- Teaching quality information
- Performance indicators
- Office for Fair Access (OFFA)
- Regulatory capture?

The basis of regulation of higher education (1)

- Knights or knaves
 - for instance, a policy instrument designed on the assumption that people are motivated primarily by their own self-interest – that they are, in the words of David Hume ..., *knaves* – would be quite different from one constructed on the assumption that people are predominantly public-spirited or altruistic: that they are what we might term, in contrast to knaves, *knights*.

The basis of regulation of higher education (2)

- Queens or pawns
 - ... a policy that took no account of individuals' capacity for independent action – one that treated those working in the public sector or those who received its benefits as passive victims of circumstance, or *pawns* – would be different from one that treated workers or recipients as active agents, that is, not as the least powerful piece on the chess board, the pawn, but as the most powerful, the *queen*.

What are we trying to achieve?

- What are the objectives of the higher education system?
- What are the objectives of regulating that system?

Knights or knaves: the view from inside

- The self-image of university staff
- Market evidence
- Loyalty to discipline
- Professionalism
- Caveats
- “Act-relevant knights”

Knights or knaves: the view from outside

- Quality assessment and loss of trust
- Research assessment and loss of trust
- Incompetent knaves?
- Extensions of autonomy
- Knavish institutions with knightly staff?

Queens or pawns: the role of students

- The formal powers of students
- Students in the learning process
- The growth of consumerism

Regulatory systems for European higher education

- Principles of regulation
- University staff as knights, students as queens
- Financial regulation
- Quality assurance and research
- Reward systems
- Subsidiarity
- Students

Conclusion

- The basis of trust
- Human motivation, human behaviour and history