United Kingdom University Education and Expansion: An Overview

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Abstract

The primary focus of this article is on the historical development of the universities in the United Kingdom. This article provides the context of the literature review and a brief history of universities in the United Kingdom, and then progresses to explain different issues such as purpose of universities, higher education and religion, growth of universities and academic expansions.

Introduction

Education can be viewed as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. In wider context, western education as a means of necessary scientific 'development', others have analysed the educational process from a more 'postmodern', relativist perspective, rejecting all forms of 'totalising reason, or grand theory', especially originating from the West (Welch and Masemann, 1997). Lane (176, p. 1, quoted in Kelly, 1991, p. 7) defined education as 'the transmission of wisdom, knowledge, experience and skills'. In this sense, it is equivalent to what social scientists term socialisation or enculturation. As societies grow more complex, however, the quality of knowledge to be conveyed from one generation to the next, becomes more than any one person can know; and hence there must evolve more selective and efficient means of cultural transmission (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2002). In a recent study, Adeyinka (2000, pp. 19-20) defined education as 'the process of transmitting the culture of a society from one generation to the other, the process by which the adult members of a society bring up the younger ones'. The growth of information and knowledge has been phenomenal, and such a volume of information becomes increasingly difficult to retain

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and pass on to future generations. The development of writing, printing and crafts became a means of classifying and ordering information so that it could be passed on to others. Experts or scholars in a particular field would often meet or live in community to exchange ideas and develop their understanding of the world around them. These loose communities often had a religious focus that provided the stimulus to expand the knowledge and document the results. Education is the idea of freedom of selection and lays emphasis on an unquestioned acceptance of a ready-made set of dogmas such as the political dogmas in a totalitarian state (such as Prussia under Joseph II or Russia under Catherine the Great) or the religious doctrines of some Christian Churches or Muslim societies (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2002). In Europe, Christians of the first century came from the upper levels of society and were acquainted with the philosophy and natural science of their time (New Encyclopaedia Britannia, 1995). According to the New Encyclopaedia Britannia (1995, p. 346):

> In medieval Scholasticism, the elevation of Christian belief to the status of scientific universal knowledge was dominant. Theology became the instructor of the different sciences, organized according to the traditional classification of trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) and quadrivium (music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy) and incorporated into the system of education as "servants of theology". This system of education became part of the structure of the universities.... .

This was Christianity with a cathedral or abbey providing the organisational unit in which the scholars both lived and worked. The seclusion of such scholars, usually monks, on religious grounds, often allowed them to spend more time thinking when compared with the general population.

The origin of university education lies in the medieval period, and this raises major issues concerning the role of university education (Kivinen and Kaipainen, 2002). If we look at this from the perspective of learners' generic needs for conditions that will foster a positive learning experience, perhaps the most important thing which learners want from higher education institutions is "access to authentic communities of learning, interpretation, exploration, and knowledge creation" (Brown and Duguid, 2000, p.232).

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The Origin of the University

The organisation of a university is fundamentally that of a community of scholars. In fact, the very word university - in medieval Latin universitas - meant simply, community (Graves, 1988). Indeed, to make sense, the word had to be modified in order that its meaning would be clear, as universitas magistrorum et scholarium means community of pupils and scholars (Livingstone, 1974). The original concept of a university was that of a studium generale, or 'School of Universal Learning' which came to mean a school where there were organised facilities for study in order to attract students from a wider community than merely the immediate locality. As Newman defined university is a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse, through a wide extent of country. On the other hand, Smith and Webster (1999, p. 39) suggest that:

> the university is, has been and can only be a place where thinking is a shared process, where the teaching is part of the unending dialogism of the outer society, 'where thought takes place beside thought'.

As Donaldson (2002, p. 96) has noted in his recent work, 'Education is a core mission of all universities'. The university, as we know it today, is a medieval invention, if by 'university' we mean a corporation of people engaged professionally in the discovery of knowledge on the one hand - research; and in the dissemination of knowledge - teaching, on the other hand (Greenwood and Levin, 2001; Kast and Rosenzweig, 1974; Kogan and Kogan, 1983; Muller and Subotzky, 2001; Rowley, 2000). The traditional role of universities in defining and valuing knowledge is less clear. In many fields, new knowledge is created in commercial and industrial settings, and the right of the academic world to validate knowledge has come under challenge, politically from external forces, and philosophically from within the academic world itself (Patterson, 1999; Wills, 1998).

Most of the universities throughout Europe today can trace their ancestry to a few universities established toward the end of the 12th and 13th century (Mayor, 1992). In Italy, the University of Bologna was founded in

1088. The first Spanish university organisation was a royal foundation of Alfonso IX of Lon in 1212, but the first to become permanent was the University of Salamanca founded about 1220. This was followed by others with Germany coming into the field later. The first German university was not, strictly speaking, in Germany; it was at Prague, founded by the Emperor Charles IV in 1348. After Prague, Vienna was founded in 1365. Heidelberg (1386), Cologne (1388) and Erfurt (1392) date from the late medieval German Empire. In next century other universities followed in the north and south of the German dominions. In the lesser countries of Europe, Cracow dates from 1364; Hungary had two in the fifteenth century; Upsala and Copenhagen both date from the second half of that century. University of Upsala (1477) was to be modelled on that of Bologna and to include the faculties of theology, cannon and civil law, medicine and Philosophy. University of Copenhagen (1479) is a centre of Roman Catholic theological learning but also has faculties of law, medicine and philosophy. However, these medieval universities had no buildings of their own and borrowed neighbouring churches (Graves, 1988; Lawson and Silver, 1973).

As early as the end of the 15th century it became clear that Oxford and Cambridge were to be England's sole heritage from the European medieval movement (see Kast and Rosenzweig, 1974). Being creatures of Church and State, they had been pulled first this way and then another, as their patrons changed with regularity, often losing freedom over selection of students, curricular ideas and staff. The traditional constitution of the English universities was, in its origin, an imitation of the Parisian, modified by the absence of the cathedral chancellor. The monks practised the art of reading and writing. All books or manuscripts were hand-written and lavishly illustrated; particularly the bible and other religious texts (see Kast and Rosenzweig, 1974). The Church of England was accustomed to view education as an Anglican monopoly in theory, with dissent a de facto but not de jure competitor, and purely secular education an abomination (Graves, 1988). Newman's ninth discourse, 'Duties of the Church Towards Knowledge', draws upon the accumulated memory shared by the university and the church. His theories on university education are set out in The Idea of a University, which has a contemporary interest (Barnard, 1969). As Barnard (1969, p. 120) advocates, 'Newman has in mind the Platonic idea, and his search is for an academic Republic. To him all knowledge is one; and as man's most fundamental relationship is to God, so theology is the most 'architectonic' of the sciences - the basis of all true education'. According to Mayor (1992, p. 8):

> In the universality of their outlook, they shared in the vast heritage of Greek and Roman civilization, drew inspiration from Christianity, and used Latin as the medium of communication.

Higher education was equally bedevilled and yet encouraged. Similar to the question of religious instruction and control in schools, university tests were a national battleground. Under the circumstances, there were demands both for the opening of old institutions and for the creation of new ones, which would offer new subjects and admit new people.

Purpose of Universities

About two thousand years before, Aristotle (384-322 BC) was seeking to discover the exact purpose of the education of his age. Was it to produce learned men, to educate in virtue, or to satisfy the material needs of society? Day (1994, p. 77) defined the purpose of the university as:

> testing and improving the quality of knowledge; developing knowledge further; using combination and confrontation as tools. The classical role of the university is both to bring cohesion to scholarship and to stimulate creativity.

This use of a new term of Greek origin, 'Academia', known as early as the 15th century, is symbolic for yet another reason: it points directly to what we should now call a change of academic paradigm, for it shows that historical philology was being used as a new means of apprehending scientific truth. This paradigm was not, however, predominant throughout the early modern period. Philology had to give way to the exact sciences, and, of these, mathematics was the universal touchstone of the 17th century. As Buisseret (1987, p.10) noted:

> Before the mid-nineteenth century, English universities basically provided a classical liberal education for gentleman. There was widespread opposition to the idea that a university education should be geared towards a particular vocation, and certainly not towards a vocation in industry. Furthermore, for a long time in the Industrial Revolution, most professional engineers were trained within industry, which remained suspicious of academia.

However, there was another aspect of the debate about the purpose of universities which was of great significance in those years and that was

the place of research. Many commentators described the university as knowledge 'producer and transfer of knowledge' (Delanty, 2001, p. 151; see also, Gibbons, 1998b; Gibbons et al., 1994; Greenwood and Levin, 2001; Stevens and Bagby, 2001) in 'a community of scholars and students engaged in the task of seeking truth' (Jaspers, 1965, p. 19). Moses (1985, p. 73) asserts the traditional view of the university:

> as a community of scholars and students, with everything else subservient to that concept. There are certainly people on the academic staffs of universities who continue to hold that view, and who hold it very strongly indeed.

Similarly, Mayor (1992, p. 8) asserts,

> in the context of rapid economic and social change, the universities have been themselves increasingly called upon to place their knowledge at the disposal of the community by assuming more pragmatic functions.

In higher education systems knowledge is discovered, conserved, refined, transmitted and applied (Clark, 1983; 84). As Blunkett addressed in THES (2001), 'Universities and colleges are powerful drivers of innovation and change ...'. Vught (1989, p. 51) suggests, '[if] there is anything fundamental to systems of higher education, it is this handling of knowledge. The primacy of the handling of knowledge is related to some other fundamental characteristics, which can be found within higher education institutions'. Wall (in THES, 2002) expressed by the equation 'HE = knowledge + skills', where knowledge and skills are assigned an economically instrumentalist interpretation and value, which is major part of the knowledge economy. Similarly, Gibbons et al. advise that higher education must prepare a future generation of 'knowledge producers' to 'travel fast' from one research project to the next, which means researchers 'must travel light, in skills as well as attitudes' (Gibbons et al., 1994, p. 75). Gibbons (1998a) identifies a 'dynamics of relevance' for higher education and defines it explicitly in terms of orienting towards these changes in knowledge production. The high-minded Humboldtian pursuit of knowledge for its own sake has been supplanted by the view that universities 'are meant to serve society, primarily by supporting the economy and promoting the quality of life of its citizens' (Gibbons, 1998a, p. 1). As Greenwood and Levin (2001, p. 433) assert:

> We believe that universities can make a valuable contribution to society based on the critical and reflective knowledge that systematic research techniques bring forward. Universities are among the very few designated centres of knowledge generation and transfer in our society and have amassed immense resources in libraries, equipment, and faculty. Thus, they have an important role to play.

The traditional philosophy at Oxford and Cambridge, as 'consensus-oriented organisations' (Palfreyman, 1998, p. 132) emphasised the importance of teaching and of close tutor-student relationships. This philosophy was adopted by the fledgling civic colleges. The most fundamental implication of Newman's (1987, first published 1853) definition of the university as 'a place of teaching universal knowledge' was, as he himself said on offering the analysis, 'that its object is .... intellectual, not moral'. Newman argued that teaching and learning in a traditional university involved three equal contributions: self-learning, learning from student peers, and teaching by the masters. Bourner and Flowers (1997, p. 82) noted, 'Universities have two core processes: teaching and research. The output of teaching is learning and output of research is a contribution to knowledge'.

This is not to deny that the universities were not also engaged in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, knowledge that was not related to economic growth or industrial advancement.

The Growth of Universities

The early ancient English and Scottish universities were connected very closely with the church (Mayor, 1992). The University of Paris that was formed some time between 1150 and 1170 became the model for French universities north of the Loire and for those of central Europe and England. Although both Oxford and Cambridge were modelled on University of Paris, their higher faculties never developed the same distinct organisation, and, while the two proctors at Cambridge originally represented north and south, the nations are scarcely to be discerned. But the feature that most served to give permanence and cohesion to the entire community at Cambridge was, as at Oxford, the institution of colleges. By 1200, Cambridge was a thriving commercial community which was also a county town and had at least one school of some distinction. Then, in 1209, scholars taking refuge from hostile townsmen in Oxford mi-

grated to Cambridge and settled there (Graves, 1988). They were numerous enough by 1226 to have set up an organisation, represented by an official called a Chancellor, and seemed to have arranged regular courses of study, taught by their own members. King Henry III took them under his protection as early as 1231 and arranged for them to be sheltered from exploitation by their landlords. At the same time, he tried to ensure that they had a monopoly of teaching, by an order that only those enrolled under the tuition of a recognised master were to be allowed to remain in the town. The earliest College was Peterhouse, founded in 1284 by Hugh Balsham, Bishop of Ely. King's Hall, 1317, was intended by its founder, Edward II, to provide recruits to the higher civil service. Michaelhouse (1324), Clare (1326), Pembroke (1347), Gonville and Caius College (1348), Christ's (1437), Queens' (1448), Trinity Hall (1350), Corpus Christi (1352), King's, St Catharine's (1473), and Jesus (1496) followed in the next two centuries. Five late foundations, St John's (1511), Magdalene (1542), Trinity (1546), Emmanuel (1584), Sidney Sussex (1596) emerged from the dissolution of small religious oriented houses and, like the King's Hall, provided for younger scholars as well as 'post-graduates'.

At the University of Oxford, Blackfriars was established in 1221. Blackfriars is the Dominican academic community in the University of Oxford, where the friars first arrived in 1221. The Hall, which occupies part of the Dominican Priory, brings together a small and friendly group of men and women concerned with the common study of Theology and Philosophy. The earliest College was Balliol, founded in 1263; this was followed by Merton (1264), St. Edmund Hall (1278), Hertford (1282), Exeter (1314), Oriel (1326), Queen's (1341), New College (1379), Lincoln (1427), All Souls (1438), Magdalen (1458), Brasenose (1509), Corpus Christi (1517), Christ Church (1546), Trinity (1554-55), St John's (1555) and Jesus (1571).

Civic Colleges Toward University

By the 19th century, the pressure of industrial expansion was turning voluntary experiments into official institutions. University College, the seed of London University, was founded in 1826, while the history of civic universities outside London began in earnest with the foundation of Owen's College in Manchester in 1851. From this point the development of scientific and technological education has gone steadily forward through a whole range of institutions. After London and Durham, Owens College

was the next institution to appear and grow towards university status. University College Bristol was established as a limited liability company in 1876. Its southwestern location in an ancient trading city separates it from Manchester and Leeds, though less so from Liverpool. There was neither a major founder nor widespread support, as in the cases of Manchester and Liverpool respectively.

Sheffield's beginnings resemble those of Owen's College. Mark Firth, an engineer and industrialist, made a large contribution to establish a college, which would teach university subjects to largely local students, without religious restrictions. Mutually advantageous links with the local medical school resulted in eventual amalgamation. The differences from Owen's early days are reminders that thirty years had passed when Firth College opened in 1879. Oxford and Cambridge had begun to expand their activities.

Mason College, Birmingham, was founded in 1880, and followed what was by now the usual path: it had been preceded by a variety of unsuccessful colleges. It was linked with a medical school, it was secular, etc. Perhaps it is the fame of this testamentary stipulation, which has led to the peculiar notion that the new civic universities were founded primarily to teach science and technology. London and Manchester were essentially concerned with offering higher education of a more or less traditional sort without religious teaching and discrimination.

Academic Expansion: Universities

Recently, Lowe (2002) stated that the greatest parallel between the situation in 1900 and that in 2000 was that higher education in the UK found itself, at both times, in the midst of a dramatic expansion. In the UK as a whole, it is convenient to group the universities into categories which share the same broad characteristics. The universities in 1990 were quite different in operation from what they became during the twentieth century (Lowe, 2002). The categories are arbitrary, and some institutions do not fit well into any particular one.

Table 1: Universities in England (September 2008)

England

• Anglia Ruskin University (Anglia Polytechnic, 1989; renamed from Anglia Polytechnic University in 2005)
•University of the Arts, London (2007)
•Aston University (1966)
•University of Bath (1966)
•Bath Spa University (Bath Spa University College, 2005)
•University of Bedfordshire (established in 2006, merger University of Luton and De Montfort University's Bedford campus)
• University of Birmingham (1900)
•Birmingham City University (previously University of Central England in Birmingham, 1992)
•University of Bradford (1966)
•University of Bristol (1909)
•Brunel University (1966)
•University of Brighton (Brighton Polytechnic, 1970)
• University of Buckingham (private university, established in 1976)
•University of Bolton (Bolton Institute, 2005)
•Bournemouth University (Bournemouth Polytechnic, 1976)
•University of Cambridge (1226)
•University of Chichester (University College Chichester, 2005)
•Canterbury Christ Church University (Canterbury Christ Church College, 2005)
•University of Central England in Birmingham (City of Birmingham Polytechnic, 1971)
•University of Central Lancashire (Lancashire Polytechnic, 1972)
•Cranfield University (1969)
•City University (1966)
•Coventry University (Coventry Polytechnic, 1970)
•University of Cumbria (2007)
•De Montfort University (Leicester Polytechnic, 1969)
•University of Derby (Derbyshire College of HE, 1983)
•University of Durham (1832)
•University of East Anglia (1963)
•University of East London (Polytechnic of East London, 1970)
•Edge Hill University (Edge Hill, 2006)
•University of Essex (1964)
•University of Exeter (1955)
•University of Greenwich (Thames Polytechnic, 1970)
•University of Gloucestershire (2001; Cheltenham & Gloucestershire College of HE, 1990)
•University of Hertfordshire (Hatfield Polytechnic, 1970)
•University of Huddersfield (Huddersfield Polytechnic, 1970)
•University of Hull (1954)
•Keele University (1962)
•University of Kent at Canterbury (1965)
•Kingston University (Kingston Polytechnic, 1970)
•Lancaster University (1964)
•University of Leeds (1904)
•Leeds Metropolitan University (Leeds Polytechnic, 1970)
•Leicester University (1957)
•University of Lincoln (Humberside Polytechnic, 1983; renamed from University of Lincolnshire and Humberside in 2001)

•University of Liverpool (1903)
•Liverpool John Moores University (Liverpool Polytechnic, 1970)
•Liverpool Hope University (Liverpool Hope University College, 2005)
•University of London (1836)
• London Metropolitan University (the merger London Guildhall University & University of North London in 1st August, 2002)
•London South Bank University (South Bank Polytechnic, 1970)
•Loughborough University (1966)
•University of Manchester (founded in 1851, Victoria University of Manchester and UMIST merged in October 2004)
•Manchester Metropolitan Univer sity (Manchester Polytechnic, 1970)
•Middlesex University (Middlesex Polytechnic, 1973)
•University of Newcastle upon Tyne (1963)
• Northumbria University (Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic, 1969)
•University of Nottingham (1948)
•Nottingham Trent University (Nottingham Polytechnic, 1971)
•Open University (1969)
• University of Oxford (1221)
•Oxford Brooks University (Oxford Polytechnic, 1970)
•University of Plymouth (Polytechnic South West, 1970)
•University of Portsmouth (Portsmouth Polytechnic, 1969)
•University of Reading (1926)
•Roehampton Uuniversity (2004)
•University of Salford (1967)
•University of Sheffield (1905)
•Sheffield Hallam University (Sheffield City Polytechnic, 1969)
•University of Southampton (1902)
•Southampton Solent University (Southampton Institute, 2005)
•Staffordshire University (Staffordshire Polytechnic, 1970)
•University of Sunderland (Sunderland Polytechnic, 1969)
•University of Surrey (1966)
•University of Sussex (1961)
•University of Teesside (Teesside Polytechnic, 1970)
•Thames Valley University (Polytechnic of West London, 1991)
•University of Warwick (1965)
•University of the West of England, Bristol (Bristol Polytechnic, 1969)
•University of Westminster (Polytechnic of Central London, 1970)
•University of Winchester (Winchester College, 2005)
•University of Wolverhampton (Wolverhampton Polytechnic, 1969)
•University of Worcester (University College Worcester, 2005)
•University of York (1963)
•York St John University (York St John University College, 2006)

English Universities

First of all, the ancient universities of Oxford (1221) and Cambridge (1226) are different from the others in size, organisation, wealth, social origins of students, indeed in almost every respect.

Secondly, the larger and older civic universities of England and Wales all have their origins in 19th century foundations. Currently, 39 independent, self-governing colleges are related to Oxford University in a type of federal system, not unlike the United States. On the other hand, the Cambridge University has relatively similar number of college communities 31 in total. Chronologically, the first of the other older universities is Durham (1832), which is, like Oxford and Cambridge, collegiate. However, it is neither very big nor in a large city. After Durham the next university was founded in London (1836).

Thirdly, by the 19th century, the pressure of industrial expansion was turning voluntary experiments into official institutions. Ten universities was founded between 1820-1920 in large cities in the forefront of the industrial revolution and thereafter e.g. UMIST (1824, Received Royal Charter in 1880), Manchester (1851), Birmingham (1900), Southampton (1902), Liverpool (1903), Leeds (1904), Sheffield (1905), Bristol (1909) and Reading (1926). These are therefore referred to as the civic universities, which first adopted research into their missions (MacBryde, 1998) and also where general education, vocational training, and scholarship, had been woven together (Dainton, 1981).

Fourthly, there are the new, post-World War II foundations (Graves, 1988). Keele (1962) started life in 1948 as a university college offering Manchester degrees but all the others were fully independent from their foundation. The University of Nottingham (1948) was the first new university after the Second World War, and was followed by Hull (1954), Exeter (1955), Leicester (1957), Sussex (1961), East Anglia, Newcastle and York (1963), Lancaster (1964), Essex (1964), Warwick and Kent (1965) and Salford (1967). Eight new green field universities were being built by the time the Lord Robbins Report was published in 1963 and more were being demanded. This is in contrast with the last major restructuring following the Robbins Report (Committee on Higher Education, 1963), when 22 new universities were created to double the total of 44 (Jones, 1994).

Lastly, The 1960s were a time of great turmoil, and major expansion to

the university system (Buisseret, 1987), which led to the idea of two sectors, essentially university and polytechnic, running in parallel. There are the former Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs') upgraded upon the recommendation of the Committee on Higher Education chaired by Lord Robbins, whose report in 1963 has been the reference point for virtually all discussion of higher education ever since. These are now known as Aston, Bath, Bradford, Brunel, City, Loughborough, Surrey (1966) and Salford (1967) in England, and Strathclyde (1964) and Heriot-Watt (1966) in Scotland.

Scottish Universities

The Scottish universities are usually considered a separate category, largely in deference to the ancient four which have the peculiarity of drawing their powers from Acts of Parliament rather than from Royal Charter.

Table 2: Universities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (September 2008)

Scotland • University of Aberdeen (1495) • University of Abertay Dundee (Dundee Institute of Technology, 1888) • University of Dundee (1967) • University of Glasgow (1451) • Glasgow Caledonian University (merger of Glasgow Polytechnic, 1971; and the Queen's College, Glasgow) • University of Edinburgh (1583) • Heriot-Watt University (1966) • Napier University (Napier Polytechnic of Edinburgh, 1964) • University of the West of Scotland (merger between University of Paisley and Bell College on 1 August 2007).	• Robert Gordon University (Robert Gordon Institute of Technology, 1881) • University of St. Andrews (1411) • University of Strathclyde (1964) • University of Stirling (1967) **Northern Ireland** • Queen's University of Belfast (1908) • University of Ulster (1965) [Ulster Polytechnic, founded in 1971, and New University of Ulster, founded in 1968, merged in 1984 to form the University] **Wales** • Cardiff University	(1883) • University of Glamorgan (Polytechnic of Wales, 1970) • Swansea University • Swansea Metropolitan University (Swansea Institute, 2008) • University of Wales (1893) - Aberystwyth - Bangor - Cardiff - Swansea - Lampeter - Institute - Newport

St. Andrews (1411) is Scotland's first University and the third oldest in the UK. It is small, residential and collegiate in character. In the Renaissance, St. Andrew's city was a thriving intellectual centre with links to Paris and other continental university towns. The other three ancient foundations, Glasgow (1451) followed by Aberdeen (1495) and Edinburgh (1582), resemble the large civics, as do Strathclyde, which historically has many similarities to UMIST (Manchester), and Dundee (1967). The latter devolved from St. Andrew's in the same way as Newcastle from Durham. The University of Glasgow, founded in 1451, is the second oldest university in Scotland and the fourth oldest in Britain. Modelled on the University of Bologna, Glasgow was, and has remained, an University in the great European tradition. Aberdeen is the third oldest of Scotland's four ancient universities, founded in 1495 as Columbus was opening up the New World, and the 'new learning' of the Renaissance was spreading through Europe. William Elphinstone, Bishop of Aberdeen and Chancellor of Scotland, established King's College to train doctors, teachers, and clergy for the communities of northern Scotland, and lawyers and administrators to serve the Scottish crown (MacBryde, 1998). But the college also looked outward to the wider world of Europe and beyond: taking the great European universities of Paris and Bologna as its model. The University of Edinburgh was granted its Royal Charter in 1582 by James VI, the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the first civic University to be established in the British Isles. Heriot-Watt (1966) is a new foundation and Stirling (1967), although it used to offer some Edinburgh University degrees, has similarities to the ex- Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs).

Northern Ireland Universities

Like Scottish universities, Northern Ireland universities are also considered a separate category. As Holt et al. (1999) noted, the education system in Northern Ireland has its own legislation and structure. In Northern Ireland, the Queen's University of Belfast (1908) is a large civic university, and the University of Ulster (1965) is a new foundation. In 1984, Ulster Polytechnic joined with the New University of Ulster to form the University of Ulster, thus removing the binary divide which had separated universities from polytechnics and colleges.

Wales Universities

The HE sector in Wales consists of fourteen colleges, with the constituent

colleges of the wider University of Wales. The largest colleges, by student numbers, are Cardiff University and the University of Glamorgan, followed by Swansea University and Bangor University (University College North Wales). The Institute of Cardiff and the University College of Newport were inaugurated into the University of Wales umbrella in 1996. The University of Wales, is the national federal university in Wales. It awards the degrees of its member institutions. It was established in 1893.

Waves of Legislation Change

There is no single coherent body of legislation dealing with higher education. However, there are some particular Acts of Parliament directly relevant to higher education. In 1963, the Robbins Report, sponsored by the Government, laid down the basic principles which guided university development in subsequent years. The Report stated that '...courses of higher education should be available to all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so'. This policy was continued by Mrs Thatcher, who, as Secretary of the State for Education and Science in the Health government, was able in the 1972 White Paper, Education: A Framework for Expansion, to announce a policy that would continue to expand higher education (HMSO, 1972, para 118). In February 1978 Gordon Oakes, the Labour minister responsible for higher education, produced a consultative document called Higher Education into the 1990s, which offered alternative future plans for discussion (Department of Education and Science [DES] 1978). In December 1980 the Conservative Government abandoned its level funding policy and announced the reduction in funds for home students. The sheer waste of skilled manpower involved in requiring universities to generate these guesses on hypothetical grant levels while ministers were deciding grant levels of an entirely different order was considerable.

The 1988 Education Reform Act

In 1987, the Government White Paper 'Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge' proposed major changes to the organisation of higher education. These changes were brought into existence by the Education Reform Act of 1988 which, among other reforms, saw the establishment of two new councils who between them assumed responsibility (in April 1989) for funding universities, polytechnics and higher education colleges (Kogan and Hanney, 2000). The United Kingdom Education Reform Act (1988)

was a confirmation and crystallisation of the policies that had been developing over the previous decade. This major reform was described by Maclure (1988, p ix) as 'The most important and far-reaching piece of educational law-making ... since the Education Act of 1944 ... because it altered the basic power structure of the education system'. The polytechnics and other higher educational institutions were removed from local authority control (Bush, 1995); further education colleges were given control of their budgets and responsibility for staffing matters; the University Grants Committee (UGC) was replaced by the Universities Funding Council (UFC) and arrangements were initiated by the appointment of university commissioners to abolish the tenure of academics (Fulton, 1991; Kogan and Hanney, 2000). Along with the demise of the UGC, the government directed that 'state expenditures on higher education should be regarded as payments for services provided rather than as block grants to institutions' (Johnes, 1992, p. 173). Universities and Polytechnics were forced to develop competitive "bidding schemes" for students to increase institutional cost-effectiveness. These reforms, together with a changed emphasis on the criteria for funding, were central to the changes in policy and structure of higher education (Conway et al., 1994; Williams, 1990). The 1988 Education Reform Act ensured that all assets and inherited local authority debts were transferred to these independent higher education institutions. For the first time, institutions could determine their own academic programme and the student market they wished to serve. Many institutions chose to expand as the funding regime tended to reward the efficient players. Institutions, mainly higher education institutions expanded rapidly, moving from a mainly postgraduate part-time course provider into a mainly full-time one. Their low fixed costs helped them to bid for increasing student numbers. Ferlie et al. (1996, p. 64), in assessing the effects of the Education Reform Act (ERA) argue that:

> The 1988 Education Reform Act contains a series of measures which when taken as a whole seek to restructure the power balance and dominant culture of the educational system.

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992

Change came again in May 1991 when the Government's White Paper 'Higher Education: A New Framework', proposed a number of substantial changes, the most significant of which was the abolition of the binary line between universities and the polytechnics and colleges. In this White Paper

the Government stated 'the real key to achieving cost effective expansion lies in greater competition for funds and students ... that can best be achieved by breaking down the increasingly artificial and unhelpful barrier between universities, polytechnics and colleges'. This came into effect in March 1992 when the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 introduced major reforms in England and Wales, including the creation of a single sector for all higher education institutions in England and another in Wales, funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils (Kogan and Hanney, 2000). The polytechnics were founded in the 1970s, and became the 'new' universities in 1992 (Warren, 1997). The 'binary system' was abolished by the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1992. At the same time, the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) were merged with the University Grants Commission (UGC) to form the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC), which was responsible for the distribution of public funding both to universities and higher education colleges (HECs) with higher education work. Despite the funding crises of the early 1980s and 1990s, certain policies seemed to persist in long term:

> Universities and colleges have remained academically autonomous. Institutions have been expected to meet diverse needs, regionally as well as nationally.
>
> (UK Higher Education Quality Council [HEQC] 1994, para 41)

In United Kingdom, new funding councils were established, with separate Higher Education Funding Councils for England (HEFCE), Scotland (SHEFC) and Wales (HEFCW). Funding of higher education in Northern Ireland continued to be the responsibility of the Department of Education of the Northern Ireland Office. The Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), which had validated the degrees of institutions of higher education other than universities, was dissolved. As Kogan and Hanney (2000, p. 123) noted in their discussion of the issue, 'The Funding Councils were required to set up Quality Assessment Committees to assess quality in higher education. The CNAA was to be abolished. University status for polytechnics and all universities and colleges brought within a single funding mechanism operated by the Funding Councils for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which formally took over from April 1993 but started functioning earlier'. Forty-one additional institutions achieved university status under the Further and Higher Education Act. Subject to the approval of the Privy Council in each case, polytechnics and other institutions of higher education (e.g. Bolton Institute, 1982; London Institute, 1986; and

Surrey Institute of Art and Design, 1969) were eligible to become degree-awarding bodies in their own right and, if they met certain criteria, might take the title of university (Holt et al., 1999).

Concluding Remarks

This article discussed the contents to the historical development and philosophical basis and the issue of UK higher education and has also given an outline of the fundamental background to the development of higher education institutions and the structure of the environment in which they operate. The institutions differ from each other depending upon their mission, location and academic purpose. This article has considered the phenomena which triggered many of the changes that occurred in UK higher education in the 1960s and 1990s, and which consequently led to the creation of structures for quality assurance and research activity. The development of the higher education system in the United Kingdom must be understood in its total context, including this historical examination of the interaction between government legislation and politics. Within this context, we can begin to arrive at a more complete understanding of the current higher education system within the UK.

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