

What does it mean to be a ‘dual sector’ institution? The making and shaping of institutional identities in the ‘new’ higher education

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Introduction

An important aspect of policies to widen participation in higher education (HE) in England is the role of English Further Education (FE) colleges in achieving the UK government’s policy goals. FE colleges have been defined as having a special mission (HEFCE, 2006a, 2006b) to deliver sub-Honours degree level vocational and work-related programmes. For colleges, this means working across two sectors in the English system – the higher education sector and the learning and skills sector, each of which has its own funding, inspection and regulating bodies. The same applies to institutions in the higher education sector, a number of which offer courses which are designated as further education. Such institutions, though officially part of only one sector, could be described as ‘dual sector’ institutions, and a small number of HE institutions in England are beginning to define themselves as ‘duals’ (for example, Thames Valley University, Derby University, and the new University of Cumbria, which was launched on 1 August 2007). Amongst FE institutions, the preferred term is mixed economy institution, which is the term used by a group of FE colleges whose members have more than 500 HE students. These various ‘dual sector’ institutions form an increasingly significant part of the landscape of higher education in England.

This paper explores what it means to be a ‘dual sector’ institution, drawing on case study data from a two-year study into dual regimes of further and higher education¹. It explores how institutions in the study go about constructing institutional identities, and considers how the construction of such identities relates to particular roles and purposes in relation to higher education.

The paper uses the concept of ‘field’, drawing on Bourdieu (REFS), to consider how institutional identity relates to positioning in the wider field of higher education, and to consider the implications that this has for students’ experience of widening participation initiatives. In exploring institutional identities in this way, the paper is concerned with how the aspirational hopes for a more just educational system, which are invested in notions of widening participation, may be very much subordinate to a rather different use of widening participation as a market mechanism in an increasingly competitive higher education market.

The first part of the paper discusses the use of the concept of field in relation to the analysis of widening participation in higher education in England. The second part of the paper discusses what is meant by a dual sector institution, and relates this to the wider field of higher education. The third part of the paper uses some examples from data from the FurtherHigher Project, a national study of widening participation in higher education, to consider the construction of dual sector institutional identities in relation to higher education. The final section considers the issues raised by the study about the positioning of dual sector institutions with the wider HE field, and the implications this has for widening participation.

The field of higher education

The term 'field' is used in a wide range of literature concerned with higher education. Although not exclusive to Bourdieu, his definition of field, and the analogies he uses in relation to his definition, are useful in exploring the ways in which dual sector institutions in England are constructing positional identities at the present time. Bourdieu defines field as a particular social space which involves a network or configuration of relations between positions. What positions agents or institutions within a field is the possession of capital (cultural, social and economic), and power.

Bourdieu further explains that fields are overlapping social spaces, which are on the one hand bounded, but on the other, overlap with other fields. Thus dual sector institutions might be defined as working across the social space of two different fields, further education and higher education, each with somewhat different configurations of relations between positions. At the same time, these two overlapping fields need to be understood in the wider field of power, where the possession of certain forms of cultural, social and economic capital count for more than others, regardless of the value that might be attached to them in a particular field.

Bourdieu's work emphasises the need for a relational understanding of field. In the context of higher education, this involves an understanding of the networks within which particular forms of higher education – such as higher education in dual sector institutions - are placed, and the relationships between them, which create hierarchies of more and less valued/valuable HE. This emphasis on relational positioning, and the importance of the possession of capital to achieving positioning, are particularly relevant in this paper.

To further explain the concept of field, Bourdieu likens fields to markets and also to games. These analogies stress different aspects of field. The notion of market emphasises the centrality of capital exchanges in a competitive context. As Hodkinson et al (forthcoming) explain: 'A field is like a market because it is a defined social space in which there is inequality but also mutual dependency.' (Hodkinson, Biesta and James, 2008 forthcoming). Individual customers have different purchasing power, and different amounts of different forms of capital (social, cultural and economic) that they may use.

The notion of game on the other hand suggests that particular social spaces, such as the social space or field of higher education, are like a game, where players pursue specific goals and ends. The notion of game suggests that people are contestants, in competition for the maintenance or increase of

capital, though people do not recognise themselves as participating in a game. People are born into the game, and their belief in the game and the value of what they are struggling for is therefore unconsciously accepted without question, it is 'common sense' (Hodkinson, Biesta and James, forthcoming).

The game analogy allows for what Bourdieu refers to as misrecognition, whereby a particular social practice appears as one thing, whilst achieving something else. In the context of education for example, it could be argued that the equation of good exam results with a person's ability imply that the game is simply about studying hard and succeeding in exams. This misrecognises the way that educational and exam success also reflect accrued cultural capital, and can therefore act as a proxy for social inequalities which are then played out in educational achievement (see Naidoo, 2004).

Both analogies are useful in the context of the FurtherHigher Project, because they draw attention to different aspects of institutional strategies to position themselves in the changing field of higher education. However, in this paper, it is the analogy of field with the market which is emphasised. The notion of market connects to a growing acceptance of higher education as a form of market, and to arguments which define widening participation as a market lever. For example Shaw et al's (2007) report to HEFCE on the case for business models in widening participation points out that:

There may be real advantages in terms of student recruitment for some universities, while for others WP might be perceived as detrimental to recruitment because of its assumed impact on elite reputation. (Shaw et al, 2007, p.43)

Ball (2007) argues that the role of the state in education is increasingly that of active *market-maker*, promoting competition and business models in education, and this argument has increasingly strong purchase in higher education, as the above comment from Shaw et al suggests. (See also Brown's (2005) presentation to the Higher Education Policy Institute on quality and diversity in a market driven system.)

What is a dual sector institution?

The term 'dual sector' institution is not in common use in England, except by a small number of researchers (particularly Parry, 2005a; Garrod and Macfarlane, 2006). It is borrowed from examples in other countries, where there have been concerted attempts to create a close interface between further and higher education, through changes to institutional arrangements. Garrod and Macfarlane (2006), who both work at Thames Valley University in England, which styles itself a dual sector institution, have produced an overview of the international picture. They give examples from Australia, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand, as well as the UK. A search of the British Education Index (BREI) database in May 2007 suggests that the term is most commonly used in Australia, where there are five recognised 'dual sector' universities, and that the use of the term is recent.

The concept of dual sector institutions is about more than the provision of higher education in further education colleges, or further education in higher

education institutions. The term is used to suggest a reframing of the nature of relationships between further and higher education. Where 'duality' is pursued as an active strategy, it is associated with the goal of creating a 'seamless' system of post-compulsory education (see Garrrod and Macfarlane, 2006; Marks, 2002). Seamlessness is seen as a way of improving progression opportunities and therefore student progress into higher education. A further goal identified by Garrod and Macfarlane is the potential to overcome the binary divide between vocational or technical further education, and academic or theoretical higher education.

The growing significance of dual sector institutions, whether designated as FE or HE, is closely related to widening participation policy in England, where the contribution of further education colleges, and by implication, dual sector institutions, is seen as increasingly important by national policymakers. The 2003 White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003) emphasised that:

FE is particularly effective in providing HE for learners from more disadvantaged groups, backgrounds and communities. Many FE colleges offer flexible, local opportunities which make HE accessible to people who might otherwise face significant barriers to participation. The sector is well placed to promote wider participation in HE. (DfES, 2003, p.30)

The same document reported that FE colleges already made a major contribution to HE provision:

10% of all HE learners were studying in FE colleges

More than 50% of them were part-time (compared with about 35% in HE as a whole)

25,000 learners in colleges were studying on Foundation Degree programmes. (DfES, 2003, p.30)

The above data position FE 'dual sector' institutions in a particular part of the higher education market. They are places where part-time study is the norm, and where students study for sub-Honours degree level qualifications in the form of Foundation degrees.

Restructuring the field of higher education in England

Dual sector FE/HE institutions are thus contributing to a reshaping of the field of higher education in England, which involves a growing number of organisations other than universities in the provision of higher education. This is promoted as mission differentiation in WP policy (HEFCE, 2006), and associated with higher education 'stratification', where different institutions are allocated different roles within an overall system (Scott, 1995). However, what lies behind such slippery terms as differentiation and stratification, is that they also involve processes of institutional positioning in a higher education market, and contribute to the battle over an increasingly complex and hierarchical status structure of different forms of HE, where until now prestige has played the part that price plays in conventional markets (Brown, 2005).

Different groupings of institutions involved in higher education have formed², and these clearly reflect a recognition that they have stakes in particular parts of the HE market. The best known is perhaps the Russell Group³, which promotes itself on research excellence, and which includes over half of the top research departments – those rated 5 or 5* in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (DfES, 2003).

With a review of tuition fees due in 2009, when prestige will start to be reflected in price, the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise is being used as a basis for this 'elite' end of the higher education market to gain positional advantage. This was noted in a recent article in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (3.8.07), which ran with the byline: "Scramble to adjust market status has already begun ahead of 2009 review of tuition fees" (Report by Tony Tysome, THES, 3.8.07, p.4).

At what might be seen as the other end of the spectrum is the less well-known Mixed Economy Group⁴. This is a group of 26 FE Colleges across England, whose members account for about half of all higher education delivered in further education. There is a different market imperative for this group. Here, the competition for funds between FE colleges and other providers in the provision of occupational training, has encouraged colleges to look to other markets, in particular the provision of Foundation degrees. The group therefore seeks to influence the government in granting degree awarding powers to FE colleges for example (as proposed in the Further Education and Training Bill 2006-07). As Peter Kingston in the Guardian observed:

gaining degree awarding powers will be some compensation for the sector as it means colleges will effectively be allowed to compete in the higher education market. At a time when more people are being encouraged to go to university and more students are considering staying local rather than leaving home, often for economic reasons, the prospect of doing a degree at the college on the doorstep will have considerable appeal.

(Guardian Unlimited, Weds 15 November 2006.

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/further/story/0,,1947664,00.html>/accessed 30 August 2007)

Whilst the above draws attention to the market nature of the field of higher education, other ways of describing and defining the structure of the higher education field offer a picture where the market is veiled beneath what appears to be a game of mission differentiation, a game which involves markedly different players, learning in very different surroundings. Marks (2002) uses the metaphorical device of contrasting images of traditional and post-1992 universities in a way that usefully demonstrates this. He suggests that the 'traditional' pre-1992 UK university is associated with an image of grand gothic architecture, a place built on the top of hills in urban or rural areas, 'a giant visual power-elite signifier for local populations to look up to in awe' (Marks, 2002, p.114). It is a place of superiority, scientific detachment, and mystique. Students in such institutions are selected on academic achievement (Gallacher, 2006). They are full-time, and they live away from home. They do not engage in paid employment during term-time. Their dress identifies them, a point noted in research involving mature students by Tett

(2004) and Christie et al (2005). A mature student in Tett's study explained how she knew she did not fit in when she saw other students' expensive trainers. Another mature student in Christie et al's study explained how different she felt by describing how she was surrounded by posh students wearing their new duffle coats. Concurring with these comments, Marks observes that these institutions are places 'solely for well-qualified teenagers' (Marks, 2002, p.113), and thus higher education is 'culturally mediated as a 'young person's activity, which renders those who return to education in later life as cultural deviants' (Marks, 2002, p.114)

Marks proposes that the physical image of post-1992 universities is not so different. He describes such institutions as associated with large physically impressive and visible new campuses in cities, which are 'as intimidating to the educationally dispossessed as many of the older institutions.' (Marks, 2002, p.114) Here too, 'typical' students are engaged in full-time undergraduate study, but in these institutions, students may be recruited to fill places as well as selected on achievement (Gallacher, 2006). However, rather than living away from their home, students may be commuter students, that is, students who study locally. They may therefore treat studying as they would a job, fitting their study into the daytime, so that they can fulfil family commitments before and after their day of study (Christie et al, 2005). Thus, while there is a spatial and temporal separation of distinctive home and university worlds (Christie et al, 2005), studying does not mean a complete break from an existing life.

These images are in considerable contrast to the image that might be constructed of English further education colleges, whose physical presence may be akin to a secondary school, or alternatively may reflect the occupational and vocational nature of the learning offered, and look like an office building, or a trade workshop. Students attending FE colleges tend to be actively recruited so that courses can run. Considerable numbers of part-time students studying HE level courses may be part-time, and HE provision is associated with vocational HND/HNC programmes, and more recently Foundation degrees. HE work is run in partnership with higher education institutions, so colleges may act as 'commuter colleges' for universities (Osborne and Gallacher, 2007).

These contrasting images of different settings involving players with different characteristics draw attention not only to an apparently neutral notion of mission differentiation amongst different institutions, but also to the way that such mission differentiation may serve to define what sorts of students belong in such contexts, and to exclude the possibility of 'other' types of students engaging in study there. Viewing this construction of the field of higher education in terms of a game serves as a reminder that competition for position and for the maintenance or increase of capital are covertly just as much at stake here, as they are overtly in a market understanding of field. Selection, prior academic achievement, availability for full-time study all act as markers of prestige and positioning in the field.

The omission of 'dual sector' institutions from the above descriptions is deliberate, for at the present time in England, they conjure up no cultural image in the way that traditional and post-1992 universities, and further

education colleges, do. They are more likely to be associated with their roles as post-1992 universities or FE colleges. The next part of the paper takes up the question of positional identity in the context of dual sector institutions, using data from the FurtherHigher Project.

The FurtherHigher Project

The FurtherHigher study is a two year research project which has used both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the impact of the division between further and higher education in England on strategies to widen participation in undergraduate education. The qualitative strand of the study has involved in-depth studies of four institutions and has followed 80 students moving between further and higher education. The fieldwork has included interviews with students, tutors and institutional managers, documentary analysis, and the collection of fieldwork observation records, and it is this strand of the study that forms the basis for the next section of this paper. The following part of the paper discusses what it means to be a dual sector institution, and the ways in which the four institutions in the study attempt to position themselves through the ways that they construct particular identities.

The construction of institutional identities by dual sector institutions

This section considers a small number of factors which reveal the formation of the identities of the four case study institutions in the FurtherHigher project, and which position them in the HE field.

The four institutions represent something of the diversity of institutions which might be called ‘dual sector’ institutions. They include two that are part of the higher education sector, Southleigh University and Citygate College. Citygate College only recently moved into the higher education sector (in 2002). The other two institutions are part of the learning and skills sector – East Heath College and Northgreen Federal College. However, in 2007, East Heath College split into two institutions, one of which remains in the learning and skills sector (New East Heath College) and one that is a private limited company affiliated to the higher education sector (University Centre East Heath). Most of the HE provision formerly offered at East Heath College will move to the University Centre, so that the New East Heath College will be a predominantly FE provider. HE provision makes up only a very small amount of the overall work of the fourth case study institution, Northgreen Federal College. The HE programmes offered in each institution are shown in table 1.

Table 1: HE provision in the four case study institutions

HE provision	HNC/HND	Foundation degrees	Honours degrees	Masters	Doctorates
Southleigh University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Citygate College	✓	✓	✓	✓	

University Centre East Heath	✓	✓	✓		
East Heath College/ New East Heath College	✓	✓			
Northgreen Federal College	✓	✓			

The differing HE provision at the four institutions gives only a partial indication of the construction of the HE identities of each institution. The changes to East Heath College described above show how HE provision is being repositioned in the East Heath area, and dissociated from the FE college. At Citgate College, there has also been work throughout 2006/07 to reposition the college by applying for taught degree awarding powers, which the college hopes will also permit the right to include 'university' in its title.

Institutional mission statements give a further indication of the identity that each institution wishes to promote, and the market that each seeks to attract. Three of the four institutions actively promote their 'dual sector' engagement in both FE and HE.

Southleigh University's mission statement emphasises that the university is a 'quite different kind of educational provider', 'a genuinely tertiary education institution, with equal commitment given to both higher and further education and a mission to encourage and enable progression within and between them.' The mission statement goes on to stress the university's engagement with work-based learning and employers, and the provision of high quality vocational provision.

Citgate's mission statement also emphasises that the College is 'a specialist provider of higher and further education vocational programmes'. The mission describes the college's aim as:

to maintain an environment that encourages and supports participation in the learning process by all those with the ambition and commitment to succeed and also states:

we will promote a culture of scholarship and opportunity that equips students with appropriate skills, knowledge and quality standards to enable them to compete, with advantage, at all levels within the sectors we serve.

The current East Heath College's mission statement defines the college as 'a leading supplier of further, higher and adult education', and says that the college 'aims to be widely respected for the quality of its courses, the opportunities provided for students and the skills of its staff.' Lifelong learning,

high quality teaching, and the use of modern technology are all mentioned as part of the institution's goals.

Northgreen Federal College's mission statement, in contrast, makes no reference to the FE or HE nature of its provision. It simply states that its mission is 'To inspire and equip learners for productive employment and fulfilling lives.'

It has one additional statement: 'To meet the agreed needs of the individual learner and build the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for the economic and social development of the city and the surrounding region'.

Another important way in which three of the institutions seek to position themselves is through the relationships that they have with other Higher Education Institutions, which in turn is connected to whose degrees they award. Table 2 shows each institution's affiliations and indicates where degree awarding powers lie.

Table 2: Links between case study institutions and other Higher Education institutions (HEIs)

Institution	Sector	Main links to other HEIs	Degree awarding powers
Southleigh University	HE	Some links between FE parts of institution and other HEIs	Has degree-awarding powers
Citygate College	HE	Local pre-1992/old university	Wants degree-awarding powers, but will continue to award some degrees using local pre-1992 university
East Heath College	Learning and Skills / FE	Nearest pre-1992/old university	Runs programmes franchised by local HEI
New East Heath College	Learning and Skills / FE	University Centre East Heath 2 nearest pre-1992/old universities	Will run franchise programmes from University Centre East Heath
University Centre East Heath	HE affiliated private limited company	Owned by 2 nearest pre-1992/old universities	2 pre-1992 universities will award degrees

Northgreen Federal College	Learning and Skills / FE	Local post- 1992/new university	Runs programmes franchised by local HEI
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Conversations with managers at each institution have made it clear that the affiliations shown above have been carefully calculated in relation to the HE market. Thus it is very important to East Heath College that the development of University Centre East Heath should be in partnership with pre-1992/old universities. Similarly, Citygate College prides itself on its relationship with the local pre-1992/old university, and faces something of a dilemma in working out which degrees it should seek to award itself should it be granted taught degree awarding powers. In contrast, Northgreen Federal College sees its HE market as built on a close relationship with the local post-1992/new university, enhanced by the fact that its central site is geographically closer to the university than to the other college sites.

In relation to students, all four institutions define themselves as having a local and regional mission, and thus look to local markets for students. At the same time, the provision of HE means that the reach of 'local' and 'regional' is further, that is, students studying on HE courses, even when commuting daily, may travel further than those on FE courses.

The market for students is not only local and regional. Southleigh University describes itself as 'a centre for FE, undergraduate and postgraduate students from mainland Europe and the rest of the world', and both Southleigh and Citygate College's student numbers include considerable numbers of overseas students.

Less expected is the significance of internal progression between FE and HE in the four institutions. Southleigh University actively seeks to promote internal progression between their FE and HE courses. Citygate College does this to a limited extent, and in 2006/07 was trialling closer transition links between FE and HE courses in one programme area. East Heath College is puzzled by the low patterns of internal transition in the institution. Northgreen Federal College has a transition manager, but internal transition patterns vary from one course to another. However, alongside this picture, comments during interviews with staff in the four institutions question whether internal transitions are necessarily a good thing. FE programmes that promote themselves on high quality may seek to encourage their students to progress to what are perceived as higher status HE institutions and courses, while internal progression may be seen as geared towards less successful, lower-achieving students.

The final aspect of positioning to be considered in this paper is the role of research in each institution. Southleigh University, perhaps as befitting a post-1992 university and dual sector institution, includes *applied* research as part of its mission statement, and aims to encourage and promote 'first-rate scholarship and focus on applied research that is of social and economic benefit.' Citygate College has a research and knowledge exchange unit, and

three staff with positions of responsibility in the unit. These staff work with college staff and students who are undertaking dissertation research at undergraduate and post-graduate level. There is a considerable amount of research activity amongst staff, but this is not actively promoted by senior management, and spending time writing up research for publication is not perceived as an activity that the institution currently wishes to invest in. The issue of research activity amongst staff has become an important issue during 2006/07 because the college is seeking taught degree-awarding powers, and has been questioned about research as part of the application and scrutiny process. Both these institutions run an annual research conference for their staff.

East Heath College has a Director of Research and Enterprise and a research centre which was established in 1997. Here there is also engagement in research by staff, but there is an expectation that research activity must be funded by winning external contracts to carry out projects. Northgreen Federal College has much less active engagement in research. It is involved in research through participation in projects such as the FurtherHigher Project. However, research by members of staff within the institution is not seen as part of the mission or goal of the college.

Discussion

The four 'dual sector' institutions in the FurtherHigher Project demonstrate that there are considerable differences as well as similarities between them in the ways that their institutional identities are constructed. At the same time, their relational positioning within the field of higher education places them in closer proximity to each other, than to more 'elite' institutions within a stratified system HE system. They share in common their involvement in the growing market for sub-honours degree level provision, which is vocationally and occupationally oriented. At the same time there is clear evidence from two of the institutions that they wish to be associated with pre-1992/old universities, and to position themselves as part of a higher status end of the higher education market. The complex nature of such positioning is indicated by the students that they seek to attract and in particular by the way that internal transitions from FE to HE are not accepted as a universal good, but are questioned in relation to the alternative, higher status routes that some students might pursue. Their orientations to research highlight on the one hand the greatest differences between them, but also suggest that research plays a very different role in institutional positioning compared with the role it plays for the elite Russell Group of universities. Only in one institution is research activity a core part of the institution's mission, and in another institution, research activity plays an almost non-existent role.

The examples given of the ways in which the identities of the four institutions are shaped in relation to their higher education role indicate not only the way that institutions are positioned differently within the field of higher education, but also the ways in which higher education itself, and its roles and purposes, are constructed differently in different parts of the field. The level of qualifications offered and the role of research offer just two examples of how

the meaning and construction of higher education may be shaped differently in particular segments or strata of the higher education field.

Moreover, whereas Russell Group universities may compete in the market for research grants, the market for dual sector institutions is the provision of sub-honours degree level programmes, and vocationally-related HE. Widening participation therefore represents a market opportunity for dual sector institutions, and may have more to do with maximising recruitment opportunities, than having a great deal to do with constructing a more just educational system. Questions about what opportunities are opened up for students by participation in this part of the field, and what opportunities may be closed down, need to be considered carefully as part of any debate about the role of dual sector institutions and the ways in which they may operate as providers of both FE and HE.

Conclusions

Implications for policy

'Seamless' provision of further and higher education in dual sector institutions may not always be possible or desirable.

Although one of the goals of dual sector institutions stated in the literature is seamless transitions between further and higher levels of education, internal transitions within such institutions may limit as well as open up horizons for action.

Vocational/foundation degree/dual sector routes may be a means of opening up opportunities, but they may also act as a mechanism for cooling out aspirations of 'under-represented' groups, unless there are clear and strong progression routes.

With the current policy emphasis on the special role of FE in providing foundation degree courses, and the use of such courses to further increase/widen participation, there are serious issues about the value of foundation degrees. Work with employers is essential, so that they demonstrate commitment to their claims that they want people with vocational degrees. In addition, it is equally important to create progression routes that enable students who start out on a foundation degree and in a dual sector institution, to have the possibility of progressing in the future to higher status qualifications and institutions, reflecting one part of the WP policy goal, which is to enable students to participate in courses with the highest financial returns.

Implications for practice

The institutions participating in the FurtherHigher Project indicate that there is no automatic relationship between the FE and the HE provision in an institution, and that institutions may be structured in such a way as to separate rather than unite provision. The assumption that this is a bad thing needs to be considered carefully, and what an effective, more closely connected system of provision might look like, needs much more consideration and debate at all levels within such institutions.

Notes

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University fieldwork research team: Diane Burns, Anne Thompson, Val Thompson, Cate Goodlad

Institution based researchers: Andy Roberts (College A); David Dale (College C); Will Thomas (College D); Liz Halford (University B)

Project directors: Ann-Marie Bathmaker, Greg Brooks, Gareth Parry (all University of Sheffield), David Smith (University of Leeds)

² There are other groupings of HE institutions. The 94 group consists mainly of universities established before 1992 and includes a number created after the Robbins Report in the 1960s. The Coalition of Modern Universities is a group of universities created in 1992 when the polytechnics joined the university sector (DfES, 2003).

³ The members of the Russell Group are:

University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, University of Cambridge, Cardiff University, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Imperial College London, King's College London, University of Leeds, University of Liverpool, London School of Economics & Political Science, University of Manchester, Newcastle University, University of Nottingham, Queen's University Belfast, University of Oxford, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, University College London, University of Warwick.

The group's website states that:

The aims and objectives of the Russell Group are to promote the interests of Universities in which teaching and learning are undertaken within a culture of research excellence, and to identify and disseminate new thinking and ideas about the organisation and management of such institutions. (<http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/> accessed 22.8.07)

⁴ The 18 original members of the Mixed Economy Group (MEG) are listed by HERO as:

Barnsley College, Birmingham College of Food and Tourism, Blackburn College, Blackpool and The Fylde College, Bradford College, City College Manchester, Croydon College, Doncaster College, Farnborough College of Technology, Grimsby College, Havering College, Hull College, Leeds College of Art and Design, Myerscough College, Newcastle College, New College Durham, NE Surrey College of Technology, Northbrook College, Solihull College, St Helens College, Suffolk College of Further and Higher Education, Stockport College, Warwickshire College, Wigan and Leigh College Worcester College of Technology.

There are now 26 members of the group. Membership is currently restricted to organisations holding 500+ MASN from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

Information from the Higher Education and Research Opportunities in the United Kingdom (HERO) website.

(http://www.hero.ac.uk/uk/reference_and_subject_resources/groups_and_organisations/mixed_economy_group3704.cfm/ accessed 22 August 2007).

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