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**Abstract**

Japanese colleges and universities are in an age of great transition. Current reforms can be counted as some of the most extensive and radical changes in the history of Japanese higher education. Although the agenda of recent reforms has been conditioned by contemporary socio-political circumstances, many of the ongoing changes are rooted in history. In this article, the reforms of Japanese higher education are examined from a long-range historical perspective. Though pre-war years are briefly mentioned, the main concern here is with reforms after World War II. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)  
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