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**Abstract**

Higher education faces common worldwide challenges imposed by social and economic factors. Yet, each system has its own challenges and demands that need to be looked at within its own context. Higher education in Saudi Arabia faces three challenges: limitation of places, depletion of resources, and quality measures. Some measures have been initiated to relieve pressure on Saudi higher education, including establishing private colleges, new postsecondary diploma programs, and setting up a higher education fund. Real organizational and financial restructuring is the neglected part among these processes. This article describes the Saudi higher education system from a critical perspective. It presents an overview of the system's evolution, the challenges and demands it faces, reaction to those challenges, and suggestions for further development. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)