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**Abstract**

Australian universities have enjoyed large-scale autonomy. In a society that increasingly regards university education from an instrumentalist point of view, universities' anxious safeguarding of their autonomy is widely seen as an attempt to evade accountability. Yet there has been an acceptance that a corollary to autonomy is accountability. Over the past 20 years, the boundaries of autonomy have changed and accountability requirements multiplied. This paper explores the developments in Australia within a wider international context. In particular, it notes changes in seven areas of institutional autonomy, staff, students, curriculum and teaching, academic standards, research and publications, governance, and administration and finance. It concludes that Australian universities have been responsive to societal expectations within the boundaries of changing institutional autonomy. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)