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**Abstract**

This article explores the emergence and impact of the mission groups in British higher education. The central argument is that given the development of a mass and diversified model of higher education it was inevitable that the higher education institutions would form pressure groups, while increased marketisation and growing inter-institutional competition have helped to sustain their presence. With particular reference to their input into the policy making process, it analyses how they contribute to a new politics of policy-making and concludes by considering the future of the mission groups in the light of the recent demise of the 1994 Group.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)