

01.4.2026

Author

WATTS, Rob

Title

Public universities, managerialism and the value of higher education / Rob Watts

Publisher

London : Palgrave, 2017

Collation

XXI, 359 S.

Publication year

2017

Series

(Palgrave critical university studies)

ISBN

978-1-137-53598-6

Inventory number

80073

Keywords

Hochschule und Staat : allgemein ; Hochschule und Wirtschaft ; Hochschulreform : allgemein ;
Ausland : Australien : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Ausland : Großbritannien : Hochschulwesen
allgemein ; Ausland : USA : Hochschulwesen allgemein

Abstract

This book provides a rigorous examination into the realities of the current university system in Britain, America and Australia. The radical makeover of the higher education system which began in the 1980s has conventionally been understood as universities being transformed into businesses which sell education and research in a competitive market. This engaging and provocative book argues that this is not actually the case. Drawing on lived experience, Watts asserts that the reality is actually a

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consequence of contradictory government policy and new public management whose exponents talk and act ‘as-if’ universities have become businesses. The result of which is ‘market crazed governance’, whereby universities are subjected to expensive rebranding and advertising campaigns and the spread of a toxic culture of customer satisfaction surveys which ask students to evaluate their teachers and what they have learned, based on government ‘metrics’ of research ‘quality’. This has led to a situation where not only the normal teacher-student relationship is inverted, academic professional autonomy is eroded and many students are short-changed, but where universities are becoming places whose leaders are no longer prepared to tell the truth and too few academics are prepared to insist they do. An impassioned and methodical study, this book will be of great interest to academics and scholars in the field of higher education and education policy. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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