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**Abstract**

In appraising existing patterns and assessing future needs, the Robbins inquiry broke new ground in treating British higher education as a system. In so doing, it went beyond its terms of reference to consider the situation of part-time higher education. This brought into view the scale, scope and character of provision and participation in the further education sector of higher education. While the need to focus its thinking and recommendations on full-time courses was never in doubt, the inquiry insisted that central policy decisions take account of all sectors of higher education and that sources of evidence be comprehensive in range and reach.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)