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**Author**

KEEP, Ewart

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**Abstract**

This article explores the important role played by higher education in broader skills and economic development policies in England and Scotland. It places the often divergent policy experiments and structural developments in these two countries' higher education systems within an international policy context and explains why England and Scotland are often tackling common problems and challenges in different ways. Scotland's retention of a centralised funding system for higher education, its enthusiasm for a closer integration of higher education with other forms of skills creation and its emphasis on skills utilisation are all leading to greater divergence from England. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)