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**Title**

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**Abstract**

A Delphi study has been carried out, soliciting views from higher education experts on likely and desirable developments in English higher education until 2025. The paper reports the most salient findings of the Delphi questionnaire and presents two scenarios that focus largely on the institutional fabric of the system. The first scenario follows the general agreement emerging from the two rounds of the Delphi study and suggests a smaller higher education system and the return of a binary divide between about 25 research-intensive universities and about 70 other higher education institutions. The second scenario is a counter-scenario that intends to present an alternative picture of English higher education in 2025. That scenario suggests a compact system of six research-intensive universities, about 40 comprehensive institutions and five private providers. With respect to the steering of the system, a key difference between the two scenarios is that the former assumes a continuing role of market forces, whereas the latter is based on a much stronger role of the government.(HRK / Abstract

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