

Evaluating the benefits of outsourcing: The case of UK Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Outsourcing has been commonly practised within the private sector for decades and the outsourcing of publically provided services is becoming evermore prevalent as the public sector responds to the need to bring about 'more for less'. Despite this pressure UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been slow to jump on the outsourcing bandwagon, but cuts in direct funding, the raising of tuition fees – resulting in more critical and discerning student population and pressure from Government has forced universities to look at ways of bringing about greater efficiencies whilst maintaining the quality of the UK HE sector. This paper presents the initial findings of a project funded by the Innovation Transformation Fund, a collaboration between the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Leadership Foundation, to investigate the benefits of outsourcing in UK HEIs. In doing so the project aims to generate a comprehensive evidence base, set out the range of options and demonstrate the potential benefits from outsourcing, in order to inform policy-makers of the future development of outsourcing across the sector.

Keywords: outsourcing, higher education institutions (HEIs), universities, public sector organisations.