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Title

Challenges for university engagement in the UK : towards a public academe?

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Abstract

This paper considers the changing role of universities in the UK as they respond to an engagement agenda that stipulates a more immersive and visible interaction between academics and the public. It constitutes a survey of attitudes to public engagement in a selection of UK universities drawing on interviews with senior academics with managerial responsibility at the end of 2009. The results of this study reflect a mood of indecision and anxiety among respondents towards a public engagement agenda seen to influence the contours of their professional identities and working lives. The study situates academic accounts that contest the legitimacy of public engagement as a core academic activity and the role of academics in communicating with public groups. Moreover, it reveals a lack of agreement and consistency in the conceptualisation and application of public engagement in higher education contexts, certainly beyond an emergent discourse of research impact. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Watermeyer, Richard, E-Mail: watermeyer@cardiff.ac.uk