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**Abstract**

Research evidence indicates that an unusually broad range of issues take on strategic significance in a merger and that organisational cultures are critical to the successful integration of staff, students and other stakeholders within a newly combined higher education institution (HEI). This study was based on two specialist higher education (HE) colleges seeking to expand through merger in order to meet the revised criteria for university status in England. It sought a better understanding of the similarities and differences between the management styles and organisational cultures of the two colleges and an assessment of the significance of these for the proposed merger. The main conclusion of the study was that management styles and initiatives needed to be mindful of the existing cultures and subcultures of the two colleges, otherwise there was a risk that the status and efficiency of the new HEI might be improved at the expense of its academic and scholarly development. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)