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Title

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Abstract

This paper explores the introduction of centrally coordinated initiatives aimed at formalising universities' relationships to external organisations. Such initiatives are referred to as structured relations. Based on a review of nine Swedish Universities, we identify three types of structured relation initiatives (network events, collaboration platforms, partnership agreements). In common for all structured relations identified are that they offer new opportunities to manage external expectations on universities, in particular as regards their ability to demonstrate their commitment to outreach activities. The formalisation of outreach activities challenges the academic tradition of giving individual professors discretionary mandates to enter and manage external relationships. Drawing on a collective action perspective, we analyse the tensions that are generated when universities introduce new elements of support and central coordination of outreach activities. The introduction of structured relations potentially contributes to changing the nature of the university as an organisation. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)