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**Abstract**

During the past twenty years the word 'lifelong learning' has become a part of the lexicon of higher education language in Europe and other parts of the world. But what are the implications for institutional changes when the university sector carries out its lifelong learning mission? What challenges is the internal life of universities facing? Drawing on experiences from the Nordic countries, France, England, China and Australia, this article argues that universities can engage in lifelong learning in at least four ways: 1) train students to develop skills and attributes of lifelong learners; 2) conduct research into lifelong learning and provide knowledge for policy development and practice enhancement; 3) provide lifelong learning opportunities for non-traditional students to increase their access and improve their skills; 4) contribute to the University of the Third Age. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)