

**Is the UK Higher Education Sector too big?**  
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**Abstract** The UK higher education sector has grown massively in recent decades. The British government sees it as having a central role to play in contributing to economic growth and in alleviating distributional problems. Yet its contribution to growth will be hampered if employers do not utilize the skills that graduates have acquired. The paper explores this issue by using data from the Workplace Employment Relations Survey, which suggest that the content of many jobs being entered in large numbers by graduates has not been “upgraded”. The paper goes on to consider the extent to which students from working class families have benefitted from HE expansion, suggesting that the benefits have been extremely limited. It ends by briefly considering the implications for the size of the HE sector.