

Education and Public Policy

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Course Outline

Since the early 1980s considerable changes have taken place in the organisation of public services such as education, health and social services. The changes have been controversial, often characterised by the introduction of competition, consumerism, and market forces. However, there have been other sources, associated with the political left, which have emphasised different values, notably decentralisation, accountability to communities, and lay input to professional practice. Rather than the detail of the impact of these changes on a particular service, this course aims to provide participants with understanding of the developments, in the ways indicated below.

1. Changes in the provision of services in such areas as education, health and social services.
2. Analysis of the forces which led to such changes.
3. The increasing role of central government (including quangos), decline in role of local government in providing such services, growth of alternative providers.
4. Changes in the relationship between local and central government.
5. Changes in the nature of management required for such services.
6. Debates about renewing democracy.
7. The role of policy research.

Assessment

Assessment is normally by means of a 4–5,000 word assignment in which programme participants are required to describe and evaluate, from a range of perspectives, policy changes affecting an organisation providing a service to the public in the areas of education, health and social services.

Participants are able to choose any organisation with which they are familiar from any of these areas of provision. To be awarded a pass, the assignment will have to show a knowledge of a range of theoretical perspectives on policy making, and an ability to relate these to professional practice.

Background Reading

- Esping-Anderson, G. (1996) *Welfare States in Transition*, London: Sage.
Farnham, D. and Horton, S. (ed.) (1996) *Managing the New Public Services*, London: Macmillan.
Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way*, Cambridge: Polity.
Hill, M. (1993) *Understanding Social Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell.
Pierson, C. (1991) *Beyond the Welfare State?* Cambridge: Polity.