

Text: The Changing Role of Universities

0. Universities have always been central to education, research, and culture. Traditionally, they were seen as places where young people prepared for professional careers. Today, however, their mission is far more complex.

1. In recent years, the number of students attending university has increased dramatically. This expansion has allowed more people than ever before to pursue higher education. Yet critics argue that the value of a degree is decreasing, as so many graduates compete for the same jobs.

2. One of the most important functions of universities is research. From medical breakthroughs to technological innovations, much of what shapes our daily lives originates in laboratories and research centres attached to universities.

3. However, universities also face challenges. Funding cuts have forced many institutions to reduce staff, increase tuition fees, and even cancel programmes. As a result, questions about long-term sustainability are becoming more urgent.

4. Another issue is inequality. While some students can afford to attend prestigious institutions abroad, others struggle to pay for basic tuition in their own countries. The gap between privileged and disadvantaged learners continues to widen.

5. Technology is transforming the way education is delivered. Online courses and digital resources now allow students to learn at their own pace, sometimes without ever setting foot on campus. This has created both opportunities and new competition for traditional universities.

6. Despite these challenges, universities remain a source of cultural and intellectual development. They bring together students from diverse backgrounds, fostering debate, creativity, and global understanding.

7. Looking forward, universities must adapt to an unpredictable future. They will need to balance tradition with innovation, ensuring that they remain relevant in rapidly changing societies.

Headings (options):

- A. The role of research
- B. Rising participation rates
- C. A long-standing tradition
- D. Financial pressures
- E. Preparing for the future
- F. Social inequality in education

- G. Cultural importance
- H. Technology reshaping learning