

1

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN INTERNATIONAL, AFRICAN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONTEXTS

Louis van der Westhuizen & Magda Fourie

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Currently quality assurance in higher education is being addressed in different ways in many countries all over the world. Different needs and emphases of governments and higher education systems lead to a tension between improvement and accountability, innovation and assurance, as well as change and control. There are both core differences and significant similarities in the structures and processes by which these issues are addressed in different systems and institutions. These differences in approaches relate to cultural, political, economic and social considerations as well as technical aspects of quality assurance systems. The latter are mainly the result of variances in the purposes or aims of quality assurance that originate from

complicated and intertwined assumptions about quality and quality assurance, as well as about internal and external conditions. Typical external conditions include globalisation and national policy expectations, while internal conditions could range from financial and efficiency needs in a higher education institution to new approaches in teaching and learning.

Internationally the main reasons for quality assurance seem to be the massification of education and its consequences; accountability from a value for money perspective (doing more with fewer resources); internationalisation of qualifications (including international standards) and increased mobility of students and staff; the professionalising of academe (staff performance, labour relations, skills development); matching programmes to labour and employment needs (co-operation and competition); the rise of private education (new partners and/or competitors); and indirect steering of higher education systems by governments (Coffield & Williamson 1997: 16 - 23; Tam 1999: 220; World Bank 1994: 15 - 25; Strydom 2001: 1). Some of these factors are discussed in more detail below.

1.2 INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

Observing the quality of higher education is never an easy matter. There are vast methodological difficulties in defining quality in higher education. These problems are multiplied when comparing

quality internationally. Notions of quality, purposes and procedures of quality assurance, as well as the scope and level of quality reviews differ from country to country depending on the national and systemic context in which higher education operates. In spite of these differences (the specifics of a higher education system), an international overview of quality assurance also reveals some similarities or common trends (the general aspect or dimension of higher education systems).

Quality assurance is underpinned by values such as transparency, validation, accountability and improvement. Which of these values reign supreme in a national quality assurance system, depends on a number of factors, as illustrated below.

There are several challenges and changes in the landscape of higher education globally that influence the way governments organise quality assurance. One major factor is the tremendous growth and complexity of higher education in many countries, with increasing competition for scarce public resources. Governments and higher education are also under pressure not only to promote the continued growth of higher education in order to supply the demand for high level knowledge and skills required by what has come to be known as the "knowledge economy", but also to ensure that a greater diversity of students have increasing access to higher education which is more open and equitable than before.

Globalisation is another factor with significant implications for higher education and for quality assurance systems. The following developments in connection with quality assurance globally are of importance:

- Multinational and regional co-operation (e.g. the European region) in the field of quality assurance.
- International networks of quality assurance agencies in higher education.
- The global alliance for transnational education (Strydom 2001: 17-18).

In spite of the growing impact of the "global village" on higher education, Clark (2000: 1) sounds a warning that higher education continues to be badly distorted by national tunnel vision, because policy-makers and researchers sometimes study only a slice of their own higher education systems and assume that their findings apply internationally. Inasmuch as many "generic" applications of quality assurance exist across countries and closer collaboration is required, distinct national and institutional contexts and requirements cannot be disregarded in the development and implementation of a quality assurance system.

1.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SOME HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS ACROSS THE GLOBE

1.3.1 The USA

Higher education in the United States of America is characterised by wide-ranging diversity in institutional forms (including a huge private higher education sector) and a strong notion of the market and competition. If higher education institutions do not want to lose resources, students and academics to their competitors, they have to regulate themselves. Considerable power has been delegated to the institutions, and the influence of government steering, particularly at the federal level, is limited. Over the past 30 to 40 years, the institutions themselves have therefore developed two processes of quality assurance (Van Vught 1991).

The first process is accreditation. In the USA accreditation takes on two forms, namely institutional accreditation conducted by one of six nationally approved accreditation bodies, and specialised or programmatic accreditation conducted nationally by profession-controlled bodies. Accreditation of a higher education institution or a specific study programme consists of a procedure of self-assessment, followed by a visit of a team of external assessors and a final discussion by a board using predetermined accreditation standards on the question whether or not to give accreditation.

The USA Department of Education certifies each national accreditation body, although technically the federal department does not control the actions of these independent regional bodies. Given the size of the USA operation (there are approximately 3 000 colleges and universities, ranging from two-year colleges to major research universities), achieving accreditation is an assurance of a minimum institutional standard of performance. The accreditation agency can assign full accreditation status, probationary status (which will be reviewed in a year or two), or no accreditation at all. Accreditation is important for good public relations to convince students to apply to the college or university, as well as for the procurement of financial aid. Reports are usually kept confidential.

Whereas institutional accreditation can be described as voluntary self-regulation and is controlled by the higher education institutions themselves through the regional bodies such as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, the second form of accreditation (programme accreditation) is controlled by the professions that have their own field-specific accreditation bodies. Accreditation procedures by these bodies are usually stricter than institutional accreditation.

The second process of quality assurance in American higher education is the intra-institutional process of systematic review of study programmes. This review process has been used by some universities for more than 20 years to assess programme quality,

to enhance decision-making and, in some cases, to provide a basis for the redistribution of marginal resources within the institution.

1.3.2 Europe

European higher education, consisting of many large systems, can neither be described as a homogeneous system nor are the approaches to quality and quality assurance necessarily similar across the continent. Still, the last 15 years have witnessed remarkable parallel trends in the development of higher education systems with interesting effects on the assessment and improvement of higher education quality in Europe (Thune 1998: 9). Governments have been moving away from the state-directed system of governance to a state-supervisory form of governance, affording higher education institutions more freedom — subject, however, to the institutions demonstrating their accountability. More freedom for institutions has been balanced by the setting up of systematic evaluation procedures. The move from an elite to a mass system of higher education has changed the nature of the student population and has produced a need for assessing the quality in higher education to meet a diversity of student needs and abilities. In addition, the growing trend of internationalisation of students and studies has made international comparison of well-defined levels of quality a priority. Because of the intensive mutual interactions between European higher education institutions and policy-makers, it is legitimate to speak of a more

or less European perspective towards the quality assurance of higher education.

1.3.2.1 The Netherlands

Together with the United Kingdom and France, the Netherlands formed part of the "first wave" of European countries which introduced the formal evaluation of quality to its higher education system. The Netherlands, with between 15 and 16 million inhabitants, has a binary higher education system with 14 universities (including an Open University) and about 75 *hogescholen* (institutions for professionally-oriented higher education).

Quality assurance on a systematic and nation-wide scale was introduced in the Netherlands in 1988 when the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) accepted responsibility for assuring and improving the quality of Dutch universities. The VSNU quality assurance system consists of an external visiting committee for each discipline or cluster of study programmes, operating nation-wide. The system consists of the following phases:

- Faculties and study programmes gather information about educational issues and conduct a self-evaluation in which a critical analysis of the strengths and the weaknesses of the process of education takes place.
- A visiting committee, consisting of external peers, judges the state of education and makes recommendations. The com-

mittee uses the self-evaluation data, as well as the information gathered during the two-day site visit, as input for a preliminary report on the programme given by the chair of the committee and as input for the public report. These evaluation reports often receive press coverage.

- Following on the recommendations, faculties or study programmes take measures aimed at improvement. In practical terms it has become a standard operating procedure that an improvement plan is created by the study programme after every visiting committee, but only in the case of negative judgements does the government expect to receive the document. A failure to implement quality improvements leading to perceptible results could be responsible for the closing of a programme by the Minister.
- The Inspectorate for Higher Education evaluates the quality assessment system (meta-evaluation) that enables the government to judge the quality of the VSNU quality assessment system. The Inspectorate publishes its meta-evaluation reports, while a summary of the reports is published in the Annual Report of the Inspectorate. This also reflects on the quality assurance system as a whole. The Inspectorate furthermore follows up on measures taken and improvements made concerning the recommendations made by the visiting committee.
- The quality cycle is repeated after a period of six years.

In 1990, the counterpart of the VSNU, the HBO Council, introduced a parallel system of quality assessment for the non-university sector. The second cycle for the university sector started in 1994 with some amendments to the procedure, intended primarily to strengthen the accountability function.

1.3.2.2 *France*

France, with its strong emphasis on the direct role of the state, is a special case in European quality assurance models. The *Comite National devaluation* (CNE) is responsible for external quality assurance. It was created by law in 1984 and has full administrative autonomy - it reports directly to the President and is thus not under the authority of the Minister in charge of higher education. The CNE is funded by the state and has its own budget.

The CNE undertakes about 30 evaluations per year and its activities include institutional audits covering teaching and learning, as well as research and management. It is also involved in disciplinary reviews which follow the basic methodology of self-evaluation and peer review combined with statistical information on performance indicators. Quality assessment via institutional audits does have an impact on funding and the disciplinary reviews result in public reports.

1.3.2.3 Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany has 16 potentially different state (*Länder*) higher education systems. German higher education furthermore has two different sectors, namely the more vocationally oriented *Fachhochschulen* and the research universities which award traditional university degrees, including doctorates. There is no central quality assurance system for higher education in Germany, but rather numerous and differently organised approaches which are decentralised and tend to be fragmented. The German higher education system seems to be characterised by the clan or profession-like control mechanism, i.e. internal and implicit mechanisms of quality assurance guarantee organisational functioning. External assurance mechanisms focus mainly on the assurance of equality and equivalence throughout the higher education system. Explicit evaluation in the form of peer review exclusively emphasises research and research performance. The institutional management level and the state are, however, increasingly trying to get a grip on quality assurance and aspire to introduce their own definitions and approaches. Several *Länder* have established their own evaluation procedures, but in some cases these are met with institutional scepticism.

Two evaluation agencies are active in German higher education, namely the Central Evaluation Agency of Lower Saxony and the Northern Association for the Evaluation of Teaching. In most of the other *Länder* the higher education laws oblige universities to

present reports on the quality of teaching every two to three years. In some *Lander the* universities have to present a report for the institution as a whole. Normally these reports are not published.

1.3.3 The United Kingdom

Higher education in the United Kingdom is subject to five main forms of quality assurance:

- Internal quality assurance processes of institutions.
- Academic quality audit examining the way in which each institution manages the quality of its educational provision [now the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) - previously the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC)] - carried out by experienced senior academic staff from outside the institution.
- Quality assessment looks at the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects or disciplines within institutions. It is therefore concerned with students' learning and achievement [now the QAA - previously the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE)] (carried out by academic staff experienced in the subject and external to the institution concerned).
- Professional accreditation of vocational and professional subjects (professional or statutory body).
- The research assessment exercise (HEFCE) (panels of subject experts).

Performance in research, as measured by the Research Assessment Exercise, is used as the basis for allocating substantial research funding.

Following the Dearing Report of 1997, quality assurance developments focused on developing a national framework for higher education qualifications; benchmark standards for each subject area; and strengthening the external examiner system.

In the UK Graduate Standards Programme the motivation was to seek new methods that would strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions to compare and evaluate their academic standards as well as the practices and processes that underpinned the establishment of standards. Used in this sense, benchmarking becomes a tool for institutional and collective regulation. Benchmarking has the potential to enable higher education institutions to demonstrate publicly that — even though there are differences in curricula as well as in teaching, learning and assessment methods — the expectations and outcomes on which standards are based are comparable within defined parameters.

1.3.4 Australia

In 1991 the then Minister of Education published the statement *Higher Education: Quality and Diversity in the 1990s*. This document made provision for a Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CQAHE) as a meso-level body to conduct

voluntary annual reviews of quality assurance processes and outcomes in all 36 Australian universities for the period 1993 to 1995. Each year the Committee's role was to issue guidelines to the institutions about the specific focus for that year; to collect quality portfolio submissions from each university; and then to send a quality review team to make a one-day visit with a view to checking the veracity of claims made by the universities in their quality portfolios. After subsequent deliberations, the COAHE produced annual reports of its own processes and its recommendations for the differential allocation of \$76 million annual reward money to institutions on the basis of demonstrated quality, with assessment presented in league table format.

In the league tables "traditional" universities overall fared considerably better than the "former colleges of advanced education". League tables contributed to enhanced competition among universities for the most prestigious positions in the apparently redifferentiating higher education sector. These quality policies also reduced institutional autonomy, as they endowed the government with more power and they reduced diversity across the sector, as all institutions sought to emulate "best practices", defined in terms of the structure and functions of "traditional" universities at the top of the league tables.

In 1996 a Coalition government replaced the Labour government at the Commonwealth level and moves toward the use of quantitative performance indicators to measure the quality

outcomes accelerated. The Higher Education Council was disbanded and quality was mainstreamed to become part of the more general accountability mechanisms annually conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. These changes afforded tighter control of higher education by the Minister.

At the end of 1999, the Minister announced the establishment of a new Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA) as an independent company with representation from the Commonwealth and State governments, as well as the sector. The principal factor influencing this decision seems to have been the need to assure customers (especially from overseas) of the quality of Australian higher education in the competitive global marketplace. The operational mechanics of the AUQA would not be very different from those of the earlier CQAHE, with a whole institutional focus and an emphasis on institutional self-assessment, followed by a meta-level validation by the AUQA. However, sector ownership of both the AUQA and the peer review process would be less than with the CQAHE so that more rigour would be seen to be applied to the external validation of institutional claims about quality. Official league tables would not be part of the AUQA reviews.

1.4 GENERAL TRENDS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACROSS THE GLOBE

International experience of quality assurance in higher education systems functioning in different contexts with different structures and different forms of government involvement, indicates quite clearly that certain basic prerequisites must be taken into account if useful results are to be achieved.

There must be an appropriate agreement, mechanisms and sufficient resources to carry out assessments. Different purposes of quality assurance necessitate the putting in place of different structures, procedures and frameworks for judgement. Table 1 provides a summative perspective of the various possibilities in this regard.

TABLE 1.1: General trend in quality assurance systems worldwide

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES	RANGE OF BEHAVIOUR		
Purpose	Improvement	Public accountability	Government goals (targeting resources, rationalisation)
Administrative responsibility/ initiator/ ownership	Institutions themselves/sec-toral agency	Buffer body	Government agency
Participation	Voluntary (usually institutions)	Compulsory (usually programmes)	
Primary procedures/ methodologies	Self-evaluation processes	External peer review	Performance indicators, statistics, benchmarking, standardisation
Framework for judgements	Stated intentions	Peer opinions	Norms, criteria, comparisons
Focus or unit of analysis	Institutional or institution-wide audits (vertical)	Programme or departmental review (horizontal)	Functions, projects, units, issues
Costs	Institutional contributions	Buffer body/pro-fessional association	Government
Incentives or sanctions	No link to funding	Indirect link to funding	Direct link to funding
Reporting and follow-up	Confidential reports	Public reports	Accreditation, ranking

1.5 LESSONS FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES WITH QUALITY ASSURANCE

National quality assessment and assurance systems should balance the internal and external needs of the higher education system, both to create an improvement-oriented climate within universities and colleges, as well as to gain legitimacy from actors outside higher education. A tilt either way could result in a risky imbalance of the specific functions and practices of higher education institutions.

As complex as higher education and quality assurance at the systems level are, the institutional level of quality assurance and issues related to quality are no less complicated and challenging. This is a reflection of the widely recognised view that the growing complexity of higher education dictates an increased emphasis on quality assurance at the institutional level as opposed to the national system level. Internationally a variety of quality assurance issues, which certainly are of importance to achieving success at institutional levels, are discussed. We can summarise the main issues as follows:

- The main value of external monitoring is the internal self-reflection that it engenders.

Quality assurance in contexts

- The nature of engagement of the institution and academics during the external processes is heavily mediated by the perceived, short-term effect of the process.
- There are concerns that external quality assurance systems impose an unnecessary burden on the institution and academics.
- Legitimacy of the external quality management systems and the

- In some countries quality assurance systems are used as vehicles to introduce and implement government policy or even institutional transformation activities.
- Quality processes to some extent do serve as a means to change curricula and priorities in response to a changing (external) environment.
- There are concerns that the costs of the internal and external systems are excessive and in no way reflect the value gained from the process.
- Although quality could be a useful tool for the development of reflective practice in teaching and learning, internal programme and student learning improvement is entirely outweighed by the impact of the external quality monitoring of student learning. The structure and organisation of external quality assurance are therefore not perceived to be compatible with empowering staff and students to enhance the learning-teaching situation (Van der Westhuizen 2001: 4-8).

1.6 AFRICAN TRENDS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

The need for change and innovation in developing countries, particularly in Africa, has never been as critical as it is today. Besides the perennial issues of relevance, inadequacy of resources, explosion in enrolment and demand for access, African education needs to confront the challenge of the 21st century knowledge revolution and globalisation — phenomena fuelled by

the rapid advances in knowledge, most of which is produced outside Africa. Added to this, higher education has the responsibility of fostering the capacity of individuals and communities to embrace democratic principles, in addition to upholding human rights and promoting sustainable development. For these and other reasons, higher education must receive the most urgent and profound attention from African governments, as well as all agencies who support the sustainable development of the region.

During the last two decades, higher education in Africa has experienced serious setbacks. In most countries institutions have suffered neglect as a result of reduced resources and a low priority given to higher education by governments. Underfunding, the deterioration of basic infrastructure for academic programmes and research, unsatisfactory terms and conditions of service for staff, as well as the persistent brain drain have been inevitable results. These problems have not only been adversely affecting the quality of higher education in general, but especially that of the teaching and learning provided by the universities. They have also had a negative effect on the overall development of African countries themselves (AAU 2001: 1-2).

At the beginning of the third millennium an investigation into the emerging trends in African higher education was launched under the auspices of the Association of African Universities (AAU). The results of this investigation, together with the ongoing project of

the AAU, entitled *Developing Quality Assurance Systems in African Universities*, reflect on the problems of the institutions with a view to enhancing their contribution to the socio-economic development of the continent in particular and the quality of higher education in general. In many cases, this has led to the redefining of the vision, mission and role of institutions, as well as to re-examining the role of government, students and other stakeholders in the development of universities in Africa (AAU 2001: 2; Ekhaguere 2000: 3).

The Quality Assurance Programme of the AAU focuses on relevance of provision, curriculum reforms and innovation, coupled with the encouragement of the establishment of national and subregional qualification frameworks to facilitate the comparability of qualifications obtained on the continent, thereby promoting trans-African mobility of skills and competencies (Ekhaguere 2000: 11; Amonoo-Neizer 1998: 308).

In order to address the many higher education problems on the continent, the AAU accepted a declaration for the fulfilment of African universities' fundamental obligations to higher education in February 2001. Among others, the declaration makes provision for the intent of African universities to achieve the following:

- To give priority to effective and positive participation in the global creation, exchange and application of knowledge. To this end, the universities should fully exploit the potential of the

1.7 NATIONAL TRENDS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

It was argued earlier (in 1.2) that international trends influence the way in which the quality assurance of higher education is organised at the national level. Yet national systems are shaped by certain conditions that, in many respects, are unique to that system.

It should further more be kept in mind that — even though national legislatures, executive departments, commissions and councils may formulate and announce broad policies — implementation lies squarely in the hands of higher education institutions and their quality assurance structures or units. However, institutional implementation of quality assurance and the specific institutional trajectory of own planning and policies must be contextualised within broader national policy imperatives.

In South Africa, the transformation and restructuring of the education system, together with rapid policy and framework changes in the public higher education system, are propelling change in higher education institutions. Yet the higher education changes nationally and institutionally have not always followed the route predicted by the national policy framework, mainly due to a variety of external and internal influences and unanticipated developments, acting either as guiding actions or interventions in steering the process. Some authors even predict that the

development and implementation of an "ideal" quality assurance and management system for South African higher education could not be done without identifying and taking note of these interventions that steer the national and institutional quality assurance and management process (Fourie, Strydom & Stetar 1999: 430-432).

An extensive list of environmental influences affecting institutional quality assurance planning and management processes can be identified. Research undertaken by the Unit for Research into Higher Education at the University of the Free State identified the main external and internal environmental influences on South African higher education.

1.7.1 External environmental influences

- National policies [e.g. Higher Education, NQF/SAQA, Labour Relations, Employment Equity and Skills Development Acts, the White Papers, and the HEQC of the CHE Founding Documents (RSA DoE 1998, 1999; RSA MoE 2001, 2002; CHE 2001)].
- Internationalisation and globalisation (e.g. overseas competition in many forms, international accreditation).
- Private education and training as role-player and competitor.
- Multi- and trans-/post-disciplinary knowledge production and partnerships with other knowledge producers.
- Information and communications technology revolution.

- Market-driven demands on teaching-learning and research, e.g. economic indicators.
- Demographic trends, e.g. student enrolment predictions.

1.7.2 Internal environmental influences

- Quality.
- Cost(-effectiveness).
- Efficiency.
- Access.
- The application of information technology in teaching-learning, research and community service.
- Equity/redress.

Both the external and internal environmental influences continuously interact with strategic institutional and operational quality assurance planning and management. This interaction takes place at all levels (institutional, intermediate or even the operational level) and in different areas (functions, services, aspects and issues).

Taking account of the external environmental influences, the strategic planners and quality assurance managers of institutions have to review the national higher education quality assurance policies in South Africa in the context of, and in relation to, other national policies that have an immediate effect on quality, as well as the other influences affecting the implementation of quality

assurance. Emphases and perspectives on the most important external and internal environmental influences could direct or even hamper national and institutional quality assurance developments, management and systems in iSou

compliance with specific expectations and requirements, and in the sense of aiming for ideals of excellence. These expectations and ideals may differ from context to context, partly depending on the specific purposes an institution pursues. Applying the principle of quality entails evaluating service delivery and outcomes against set standards with a view to improvement, accountability, renewal or progress.

South African higher education has been subjected to an intensive period of policy formulation and planning in a deliberate attempt to steer the system towards an integrated and coherent national system, given the fragmented and highly uneven quality system inherited from the apartheid past.

From the priority areas emphasised in the South African National Plan for Higher Education (RSA MoE 2001), it is quite clear that the issue and the promotion of quality are central.

It is within this context that it might be accurate to claim that there is hardly another country that has received as much advice from external agents regarding how to transform higher education and how to set up mechanisms of improving quality as South Africa has in recent years. Honest, reflective and sensitive interactions were accompanied by large numbers of "quality experts" who acted as missionaries of the quality assurance systems of their own countries, aiming to superimpose their own recognised systems on this context. Given the multitude of

Quality assurance

is relatively new to South Africa and therefore there is a lack of experience and capacity. This capacity problem is particularly acute at the historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs), given the historical legacies of our South African higher education system. The current implementation of quality assurance across the higher education system is dependent on capacities and resources which are more advanced at some historically advantaged institutions (HAIs), resulting in uneven implementation across the higher education system. An inevitable result is that, because of the lack of expertise, quality assurance is implemented at some institutions as a set of techniques and recipes that are imported from other contexts that are not appropriate for the South African situation. A further problem is that each institution implements quality assurance in isolation from the others with hardly any support structures. This means that the implementation of quality assurance will not easily result in transformation, accountability and improvement of the quality of higher education.

The development of research capacity should contribute to a philosophy of quality which appropriately deals with the tensions between concern for highest quality and efforts to reduce inequality. It should furthermore set a new agenda of differentiation which neither promotes mediocrity, nor stratifies in such a way that the historically disadvantaged are "cooled out". Thus the overall goal of the Local Exchange Grant Research Project was the endeavour to develop research capacity on quality assurance and

management within selected universities in the country through pursuing the following aims:

- To assist in focusing the conceptual base of quality, quality assurance and quality management. It was anticipated that the results of these efforts could be an extraordinarily valuable contribution from South Africa to the international search for convincing concepts of quality in higher education.
- To critically review the national higher education quality assurance policies in South Africa in the context of and in relationship to other national policies (e.g. the Labour Relations Act, the Skills Development Act and the Employment Equity Act) that have an immediate effect on quality.
- To produce case studies that could identify changes and tensions in the underlying concepts, discrepancies between concepts, as well as the restructuring of higher education curricula and their implementation at South African universities. It was, for example, anticipated that these case studies could provide perspectives on the most successful ways of improving quality and to disentangle which settings of intra-institutional diversity are valuable learning environments for students from diverse educational backgrounds. Such case studies could also identify the most successful ways of attaining the highest levels of quality, equity and competitiveness.
- To analyse the tensions between notions of quality in higher education institutions and outside higher education in the form of graduate employment and work success, utilisation of

research, and the impact of service by higher education on society, thereby addressing the possible sterility of purely academic quality paradigms that ignore a balanced stakeholder analysis.

The research drew together representatives from selected universities which included all the historically disadvantaged universities and the Universities of the Free State, Natal and South Africa as the co-ordinators of the project and as "capacity builders" to assist the project participants. Three training workshops were held to consider theoretical and practical quality assurance and quality management developments at international, continental and national levels as well as to support participants in preparing case studies on quality issues embedded in institutional quality assurance developments and perspectives. To gain a regional perspective, the Universities of Botswana and Lesotho were also included in the project. One representative from each of the following institutions was contracted to participate in this research

m oa.864 Tw7slc(o) Tj0>0 Tc(n9h) Tj3.25 Tj0.6Med.276 Tc(qualit) Tj Tj Tj0 Tc03 Tw-044 Tw-0.6 T

- => University of the North
- => University of South Africa
- => University of Transkei
- => University of Venda
- => University of the Western Cape
- => University of Zululand
- => Vista University.

Without exception the researchers participating in the project contributed to the fulfilment of the aims of the project. Their case studies illustrate a quality assurance intervention embedded in institutional or operational contexts, activities and discussions. The extended engagement culminated in this publication on quality assurance issues at different institutions, complemented by continental and international perspectives on globalisation in quality assurance and management.

LITERATURE CONSULTED

AAU (Association of African Universities). 2001. *Declaration on the African University in the Third Millennium* (<http://www.aau.org/releases/declaration.htm>). Retrieved on 10 October 2001.

Amonoo-Imeizer, EH. 1998. Universities in Africa - the need for adaptation, transformation, reformation and revitalization. *Higher Education Policy* 11: 301-309.

Clark, BR. 2000. Focussing on institutions. *OECDIMHEUo.* 2: 1.

CHE (Council on Higher Education). 2001. *HEQC Founding Document*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Coffield, F & Williamson, B. 1997. *Repositioning Higher Education*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education.

Ekhaguere, GOS. 2000. Building a culture of quality: The Quality Assurance Programme of the Association of African Universities. Paper presented at the Local Exchange Grant Project Workshop 3. Unit for Research into Higher Education, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

Fourie, M, Strydom, AH & Stetar, J. 1999. *Reconsidering Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Perspectives on Programme*

Assessment and Accreditation. Bloemfontein: The University of the Orange Free State.

RSA DoE (Republic of South Africa. Department of Education). 1998. Higher Education Institutional Plans: An overview of the First Planning Phase - 1999/2001. Report. (Unpublished document.)

Tarn, M. 1999. Quality assurance policies in Higher Education in Hong Kong. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 21(2): 215-227.

Thune, C. 1998. The European systems of quality assurance - dimensions of harmonization and differentiation. *Higher Education Management* 10(3): 9-25.

Van der Westhuizen, U. 2001. Report of the International EAIR Seminar "The end of quality", held in Birmingham from 25-26 May 2001. Unit for Research into Higher Education, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

Van Vught, FA. 1991. *Towards a general model of higher education quality assessment*. Enschede: Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS).

World Bank, The. 1994. *Development in practice: Higher Education, the lessons of experience*. Washington: The World Bank.