

QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the importance of quality management and quality assurance in higher education. As global expectations regarding accountability and performance in education rise, universities are pursuing much more systematic strategies to enhance institutional quality. The article addresses both internal and external quality assurance mechanisms, including accreditation, strategic planning, and continuous improvement practices. It also examines the role of international standards, such as European Standards and Directives, in aligning institutions with global norms. Stakeholder engagement, particularly student involvement, is highlighted as a critical component of quality improvement. Ultimately, quality assurance is depicted not merely as compliance with standards, but as a highly dynamic, ongoing effort toward institutional excellence and innovation in education.

Keywords: Higher Education, Quality Assurance, Quality Management, Accreditation, Strategic Planning

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are facing globalized education systems, ever-increasing student demand, and constantly changing societal expectations. In this context, quality management and quality assurance processes are of great importance for the sustainable success of educational institutions, as well as for establishing transparent accountability mechanisms (Iyer, 2018). Quality assurance consists of a set of systematic processes that ensure that the education offered by higher education institutions is in compliance with predetermined standards and is improved over time (Suleiman, 2023).

This process serves fundamental goals such as student-centered education delivery, ensuring institutional reputation, and demonstrating integrity with international standards (Tinapay et al., 2024). The quality assurance process consists of two main components: internal and external quality assurance. Internal quality assurance comprises evaluation and improvement activities carried out within each institution. Lifelong learning assessment, student feedback systems, and instructional improvement programs are particularly important in this context. On the other hand, external quality assurance is carried out through analyses conducted by independent accreditation bodies and significantly strengthens institutional accountability (Hanft, 2020).

Equivalency measures the compliance of higher education institutions and programs with specific standards and provides documentation of this compliance (Gaston, 2023; Russell, 2023). This process increases the international recognition of institutions while simultaneously demonstrating the reliability of national quality systems. It also facilitates a more active involvement of students in their educational processes, supporting their participation as stakeholders in quality processes (Hahn, 2004).

International Standards and International Policies

The concept of quality is not limited to academic outputs but also encompasses education, research, administrative processes, and stakeholder relations. Quality management in higher education is based on strategic planning, internal and external evaluation, total quality management, and accountability. In this context, quality assurance enables institutions to systematically measure, evaluate, and improve their performance (Aithal and Maiya, 2023).

Fundamental Dimensions of Quality Management

Quality management in higher education begins with defining institutional goals and planning the necessary processes to achieve them. In this process, institutions design strategic plans that meet student needs, business expectations, and international quality standards. Within the framework of strategic planning, multiple indicators

are determined, such as curriculum development and improvement, teaching staff characteristics and qualifications, and methods for analyzing learning outcomes (Grillitsch and Felscher, 2024).

Quality assurance practices in the global higher education sector encompass numerous policies and standards that vary across regions but all serve a common purpose (Fernandes and Singh, 2022; Duarte and Vardasca, 2023). The European Quality Assurance Standards and Guiding Principles, approved by the European Higher Education Area, aim to make the quality assurance processes of institutions internationally recognizable (Alesi and Kehm, 2010; Janssens et al., 2022). These standards aim to establish systematic quality assessment processes and promote continuous improvement in higher education institutions (Braun et al., 2023; Okpala and Korzeniowska, 2023).

Current literature indicates that quality assurance systems should not be limited to traditional compliance-focused structures, but should be rebuilt to meet the needs of the next generation, such as digital transformation and technological adaptation. In the Society 5.0 era, quality management is seen not merely as a control mechanism, but as an approach that supports the strategic development of organizations and includes the views and contributions of all stakeholders (Troisi et al., 2024).

In conclusion, quality assurance in higher education is not merely about compliance with standards, but also a dynamic, inclusive, and strategic effort to enhance institutional credibility, encourage continuous improvement, and ensure that educational outcomes are better aligned with societal and global expectations.

Discussion and Conclusion

Quality management and quality assurance in higher education play a significant role in ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of education systems (Bakhmat, et al., 2022; Javed and Alenezi, 2023). Quality assurance systems enable higher education institutions to systematically evaluate their educational processes, providing education that is highly responsive to student needs, accountable, and compliant with international standards (Knispel, 2008; Kaufmann, 2009; Sheperd, 2025).

The coordinated implementation of internal and external evaluation mechanisms strengthens the internal dynamics of institutions while increasing their credibility with external stakeholders (Bauer, 2003; Mello and Vargas, 2022; Multrus, 2013).

Furthermore, the effective implementation of quality assurance mechanisms requires the active participation of stakeholders such as students, educators, faculty, the business community, and other individuals in society (Bohlens, 2025; Leal Filho et al., 2025; Leisyte and Westerheijden, 2014). Including students in all these quality processes significantly contributes to improving educational outcomes and promotes the continuous development of the education system (Tariq, 2025).

Research on quality management and quality assurance in higher education, particularly conducted internationally in recent years, shows that this field is not merely a technical process (Al-Zoubi et al., 2023). This also includes important dimensions such as institutional culture, management strategy, and stakeholder participation. Quality assurance approaches are seen as indispensable tools for improving the performance of institutions in the international competitive environment and for measuring the effectiveness of education systems (Dugarova et al., 2016; Fend, 2014).

In this context, quality assurance is considered not only a process of complying with standards, but also a continuous strategic effort by organizations to improve themselves and achieve excellence. By adopting quality assurance, organizations both improve the student experience and ensure that educational outcomes are more aligned with societal needs (Joshua, 2025).

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