THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMED INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES ON QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

Norman Themba Mosia

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

in the

Faculty of Education
University of Pretoria

Promoter: Prof. Dr AJ van der Bank

May 2002
DEDICATED TO

MY LATE MOTHER AND

MY CHILDREN
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following persons and institutions for assisting me in this research:

- Prof Anita van der Bank who believed in me and guided me through the study. Her suggestions and critique were invaluable.

- All the Vice Chancellors and their designated appointees at South African HEIs who completed the questionnaires with all enthusiasm and genuineness. In addition, I wish to thank all the participants in the interviews conducted, and I value the documentation supplied in enriching the study.

- My family for their understanding and support during my studies.

- Prof MG Mahlomaholo and Dr K Naidoo for the efficient way in which they proofread and made suggestions in my thesis.

- Annette Swart and Elize de Klerk for their undivided support and dedication in typesetting and graphic design of the thesis.

- Rina Owen and Solly Millard of the Research Support at the University of Pretoria for their assistance with statistics.

- Rachel Morake of the English Department at the Medical University of Southern Africa for the language editing of my thesis.
ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF THE TRANSFORMED INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY

NORMAN THEMBA MOSIA

PROMOTER: 
Prof. Dr A J van der Bank

DEPARTMENT: 
Education Management & Policy Studies

DEGREE: 
Philosophiae Doctor

Higher education transformation in South Africa has necessitated an ambitious programme of action among the many competing priorities and interests. Quality and quality assurance mechanisms are firmly placed on the agenda for immediate attention by institutions of higher learning. This thesis attempts to respond to the research question as to whether the transformed institutional governance structures make an impact on the quality assurance mechanisms in HEIs. In order to provide a conceptual response to the question, the study analysed various theories and findings of renowned 'quality gurus' on their understanding of quality.

Another dimension explored by way of responding to the research question theoretically, is the transformation of governance structures in HEIs, and how the legislative framework placed governance and quality on their agendas. International case studies on how the transformation of systems had impacted
on the quality in higher education are discussed. This is done through a
review and interrogation of literature in a bid to formulate a plausible
hypothesis for this study, affirming that the transformation of governance
structures do have an impact on the quality assurance mechanisms of HEIs
the world over.

A unique feature, which is a finding of this thesis, is that the impact on QA
needs to be historicised. Efforts towards transformation have located HEIs
into two distinct categories of Historically Advantaged and Historically
Disadvantaged Institutions. This classification further developed into the so­
called ‘emerging-stable’, ‘uncertain-unstable’, ‘entrepreneurial-expanding’ and
‘traditional-elite’ HEIs that are unique to South African higher education. In a
nutshell, the major finding is that HEIs in the ‘entrepreneurial-expanding’ and
the ‘traditional-elite’ categories are affected differentially in relation to the
‘uncertain-unstable’ and ‘emerging-stable’ categories.

To arrive at these findings the study triangulated both the quantitative and
qualitative research methodologies with the aim of a broader understanding
and in-depth analysis of the data.

On the strength of the findings, the study proceeds to formulate possible
areas for further investigation as well as recommendations for quality
enhancement in institutional governance structures. The study is a resource
for all public HEIs, and especially those that have perennial governance
problems that inadvertently derail the broader national quality goals.
KEY WORDS

Higher Education

Transformation

Governance structures

Quality Assurance

Quality Management

Accountability and Improvement

Efficiency and Effectiveness

Academic standards

Self-evaluation

International competitiveness
CHAPTER 1: THEME ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Clarification of Concepts

1.2.1 Higher Education Transformation (HET)

1.2.2 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

1.2.3 Institutional Governance Structures
1.2.4 Co-operative Governance 5

1.2.5 National Policy Priorities 6

1.2.6 Quality and Quality Assurance 6

1.3 Legislative Requirements and the Transformation 7
   Imperatives

1.4 Quality in Higher Education 9

1.4.1 Quality Assurance in Higher Education 11

1.4.2 Quality Assurance and International Perspectives 11

1.5 Statement of the Problem 12

1.5.1 Main Problem 12

1.5.2 Sub-Problems 14

1.6 Hypothesis 16

1.7 Aims of the Study 16
1.7.1 Specific Aim 16

1.7.2 General Aims 17

1.8 Research Methodology 18

1.8.1 Literature Review 18

1.8.2 Quantitative Research Design 19

1.8.3 Qualitative Research Design 19

1.9 Significance of the Study 20

1.10 Research Programme 21

1.10.1 Outline of the Chapters 22

1.11 Conclusion 24
CHAPTER 2: NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction 26

2.2 Historical overview of higher education transformation 28

2.3 Pressures facing Higher Education in South Africa 30

2.4 Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the transformation of Higher Education, 1997 34

2.4.1 Background for the White Paper 3 34

2.4.2 Governance framework 35

2.5 Structures of governance at systemic level 37

2.5.1 The quality promotion unit of SAUVCA 38

2.5.2 Certification Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC) 39

2.5.3 The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) 39
2.5.4 The Evaluation of SERTEC and the QPU

2.5.4.1 Terms of Reference

2.5.4.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of SERTEC and QPU

2.5.4.3 Lessons learned from the SERTEC-QPU Audit

2.5.5 The HEQC Founding Principles

2.6 The South African Qualifications Authority Act 58 (1995)

2.7 Structures of Governance at Institutional Level

2.7.1 Council

2.7.1.1 Powers and Functions

2.7.1.2 Implications for Institutional Governance Structures

2.7.1.3 Mandated Responsibilities of Governing Councils

2.7.2 Senate

2.7.2.1 The Role of Senate

2.7.2.2 The Composition of Senate

2.7.2.3 Functions of an Academic Senate
CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF QUALITY NOTIONS AND STANDARDS, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF TQM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

3.1 Introduction 65

3.2 Historical Overview of Quality 66

3.2.1 Phillip B Crosby 69

3.2.2 W. Edwards Deming 72

3.2.3 Armand V. Feigenbaum 74
3.2.4 Joseph M. Juran

3.3 The Notion of Quality in Higher Education

3.3.1 Quality as Exceptional or Excellence

3.3.2 Quality as Perfection or Consistency

3.3.3 Quality as 'Fitness for Purpose'

3.3.4 Quality as Value for Money

3.3.5 Quality as Transformation

3.4 Standards and their relationship with quality

3.4.1 Academic Standards

3.4.2 Standards of competence

3.4.3 Service Standards

3.4.4 Interrelationship between Quality and Standards

3.5 Total Quality Management (TQM) in Higher Education

3.5.1 The Principles of TQM
4.3.1 INQAAHE 131
   4.3.1.1 The Purpose of INQAAHE 131

4.3.2 GATE 132

4.4 Quality Perspectives from Australia 133
   4.4.1 The Australian Government Policy 134
   4.4.2 Institutional Reviews 136
   4.4.3 The Case of Monash University 138
      4.4.3.1 The Current Strategic Foci 140

4.5 Quality Perspectives from New Zealand 142
   4.5.1 Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) Case Study 143
   4.5.2 Current QA Strategic Developments 144

4.6 Quality Assurance Perspectives in the United States of America 146
   4.6.1 Towards a more competitive Higher Education System in the United States 149
4.6.2 Implementation Strategy for Total Quality at Babson College: A case study (presented by Dr Engelkemeyer, Director of Quality) 150

4.6.3 Using Total Quality as a way to manage the Institution 151

4.7 Quality Perspectives in the United Kingdom 155

4.7.1 Background to Institutional Self-evaluation and Quality in the United Kingdom 155

4.7.2 Institutional Approaches to quality monitoring in the United Kingdom 159

4.7.3 The University of Central England in Birmingham: A Case Study 163

4.8 Implications of International Comparisons on Quality Assurance Mechanisms in South Africa 165

4.9 Conclusion 173
CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODS 176

5.1 Introduction 176

5.2 Research Paradigm 177

5.3 Research Strategy 178

5.4 Quantitative Data Collection 181

5.4.1 The Purpose of the Questionnaire 182

5.4.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of using a Questionnaire 183

5.4.2.1 Advantages of a Questionnaire 184

5.4.2.2 Disadvantages of Questionnaires 184

5.4.3 Questionnaire Construction 185

5.4.3.1 Structure of the Questionnaire 185

5.4.3.2 Reliability and Validity 186

5.4.4 Administration of the Questionnaire 187

5.4.4.1 Communication 187

5.4.4.2 Questionnaire Responses 188

5.4.5 Data Analysis 190
7.3.1 Governance at the level of Council  
7.3.1.1 Accountability  
7.3.1.2 Fiduciary Responsibilities of Council  
7.3.1.3 Policy-making  
7.3.1.4 Strategic Planning  
7.3.1.5 Allocation of Scarce Resources  
7.3.2 Governance at the level of Senate  
7.3.2.1 Maintenance of Academic Standards  
7.3.2.2 Improvement/Developmental Approach to Quality  
7.3.2.3 International Competitiveness of Academic Programmes  
7.3.2.4 “Value for Money” for Customers/Students  
7.3.3 The Quality Focus  
7.3.4 Institutional Forum (IF)  
7.4 Conclusion  

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  

8.1 Introduction
8.1.1 The aim of the study 270

8.2 Findings 274

8.3 Recommendations 281

8.4 Limitations of the Study 284

8.5 Further Research 285

8.6 Conclusion 286

BIBLIOGRAPHY 289

APPENDICES
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Research Programme</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>Increasing Pressures on Higher Education</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.2</td>
<td>South African Higher Education Institutional Governance</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.3</td>
<td>Institutional governing structures and their relationship</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Triangle of interactions</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>Customer Feedback Process (PDCA cycle)</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.3</td>
<td>The Quality Planning Road Map</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.4</td>
<td>House of Total Quality</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Who is the Customer of higher education?</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Designs</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Interrelationship between Quality and Standards</th>
<th>95</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.1</td>
<td>Characteristics of Qualitative and Quantitative Research</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.2</td>
<td>Common Types of Qualitative Research in Education</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
<td>Academic Audit Unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQA</td>
<td>Australian Quality Awards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>British Standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTFs</td>
<td>Broad Transformation Forums</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE</td>
<td>Council on Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNAA</td>
<td>Council for National Academic Awards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQAHE</td>
<td>Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CQI</td>
<td>Continuous Quality Improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTP</td>
<td>Committee of Technikon Principals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCP</td>
<td>Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEETYA</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Training and Youth Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQA</td>
<td>Division of Quality Audit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAA</td>
<td>External Quality Assurance Agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQM</td>
<td>External Quality Monitoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETQAs</td>
<td>Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GATE</td>
<td>Global Alliance for Transnational Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEAR</td>
<td>Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAIIs</td>
<td>Historically Advantaged Institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDIs</td>
<td>Historically Disadvantaged Institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEA</td>
<td>Higher Education Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEC</td>
<td>Higher Education Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIs</td>
<td>Higher Education Institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEQC (RSA)</td>
<td>Higher Education Quality Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEQC (UK)</td>
<td>Higher Education Quality Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HET</td>
<td>Higher Education Transformation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMI</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Inspectorate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFs</td>
<td>Institutional Forums</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHEQC</td>
<td>Interim Higher Education Quality Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQRP</td>
<td>Internationalization Quality Review Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Organization for Standardization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCHE</td>
<td>National Commission on Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPHE</td>
<td>National Plan on Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSFAS</td>
<td>National Student Financial Aid Scheme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZQA</td>
<td>New Zealand Qualifications Authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZVCC</td>
<td>New Zealand Vice Chancellors’ Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA</td>
<td>Plan-Do-Check-Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QAAHE</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QMS</td>
<td>Quality Management System</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QPU</td>
<td>Quality Promotion Unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDP</td>
<td>Reconstruction and Development Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SABS</td>
<td>South African Bureau of Standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAQA</td>
<td>South African Qualifications Authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU-SRCs</td>
<td>South African Universities-Students' Representative Councils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAUVCA</td>
<td>South African Universities Vice Chancellors' Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERTEC</td>
<td>Certification Council for Technikon Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNQAF</td>
<td>SAUVCA National Quality Assurance Forum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Statistical Process Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRC</td>
<td>Students' Representative Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEFSA</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQA</td>
<td>Teaching Quality Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQM</td>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCE</td>
<td>University of Central England</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>