



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

by

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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

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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

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAU	Academic Audit Unit
AQA	Australian Quality Awards
BS	British Standards
BTFs	Broad Transformation Forums
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
CQAHE	Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals
CVCP	Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education and Training and Youth Affairs
DoE	Department of Education
DQA	Division of Quality Audit
EQAA	External Quality Assurance Agency
EQM	External Quality Monitoring
ETQAs	Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies
GATE	Global Alliance for Transnational Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
HAIs	Historically Advantaged Institutions
HDIs	Historically Disadvantaged Institutions
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Act
HEC	Higher Education Council
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEQC (RSA)	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQC (UK)	Higher Education Quality Council
HET	Higher Education Transformation
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
IFs	Institutional Forums
IHEQC	Interim Higher Education Quality Committee
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IQRP	Internationalization Quality Review Process
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPHE	National Plan on Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority

NZVCC	New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAHE	Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education
QMS	Quality Management System
QPU	Quality Promotion Unit
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAU-SRCs	South African Universities-Students' Representative Councils
SAUVCA	South African Universities Vice Chancellors' Association
SERTEC	Certification Council for Technikon Education
SNQAF	SAUVCA National Quality Assurance Forum
SPC	Statistical Process Control
SRC	Students' Representative Council
TEFSA	Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa
TQA	Teaching Quality Assessment
TQM	Total Quality Management
UCE	University of Central England
UK	United Kingdom

UNESCO United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural
Organization

VUW Victoria University of Wellington

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