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

by

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DEDICATED TO

MY LATE MOTHER AND

MY CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

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

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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
WP3	White Paper 3

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1

THEME ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Higher education in the Republic of South Africa is undergoing radical transformation as a result of the prolonged historic discriminatory policies and practices of the apartheid regime. According to the *Citizen*, "South African universities have to manage an almost impossible set of forces - a financial squeeze; calls for transformation, and the demand for quality" (1999: 12). As background information, Behr (1984: 144) reminds us that in June 1959, '*The Extension of University Education Act* (Act 45 of 1959)' provided for the establishment, maintenance, management and control of university colleges for Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

The major highlight of the Act, according to Behr (1984: 145), was "the creation of the state- controlled alongside the state- aided universities, and the deprivation of the universities of the right to accept or reject students for admission". Consequently, Whites were prohibited from attending the universities created for Blacks, and likewise debarred Blacks from registering or attending the Whites-only universities, other than the University of South Africa, as students. It is against this background that the system of higher education in South Africa was fraught with inequalities in relation to funding, access policies, perceptions on academic standards and the general governance of institutions of higher learning.

On the other hand, Bunting (1995: 1) argues that one of the many flaws that existed in South Africa's higher education system a little over the past 25 years has been the ignoring by the government of broader policy issues when funding mechanisms and arrangements have been under discussion. For example in late 1981 the Department of National Education established a working group to investigate the issue of government financing of universities. This working group proposed in mid- 1982 a new formula that was based on analyses made only of the state of, and requirements of the 11 "universities for Whites", as was the Van Wyk de Vries formula. The report paid little attention to wider higher education policy issues and was largely concerned about finding ways of (a) generating additional funds for the white universities and (b) distributing these funds to universities in as mechanical a way as possible.

Wolpe and Sehoole (1995: 3), in support of this assertion argued that although the situation in higher education was very well documented, and is by now well known, it is nonetheless important to recall certain key features since restructuring and, linked to this, funding will have to be framed so as to deal, *inter alia*, with gross inequalities, fragmentation and incoherence, and finally the functional inappropriateness of the sector.

The inequalities between Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) and Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAIs) are both material and functional in that disparities exist in financing, material resources, staffing, undergraduate teaching loads, quality of students, availability of courses and so forth. The view that Badat, Barends & Wolpe (1995: 1) held is that

> *"indeed the social-structural inequalities of class, race, gender, institutional nature that have been generated by a particular trajectory of economic and social development during the segregationist and apartheid periods have profoundly conditioned the character of post-secondary education in South Africa".*

According to them, the challenge now is to move beyond a discourse of radical needs to one of means in the midst of restructuring and transformation that pervades the air in higher education in South Africa.

The flaws inherent in this separation of policy issues and financial arrangements was exacerbated in 1985 when the current subsidy formula was applied to the "universities for Africans, Coloureds and Indians" without any prior critical study being made of the assumptions upon which the formula was based, or of the higher education policy framework within which it had been applied. In his detailed discussion of the current subsidy formula, Bunting (1994: 129 – 149) further argued that the financial pressures faced by historically disadvantaged institutions are by and large attributed to the application of the formula.

Given the enormity of the historic inequalities resulting from apartheid that require redressing, such as access, the competing priorities of quality assurance, and fiscal constraints facing HEIs, this study explores the management dynamics of ensuring quality and maintaining academic standards by the transformed institutional governance structures within a dynamically transforming higher education system. Good governance is equally underpinned by best practices of equity and redress, effectiveness and efficiency, democratisation and development, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability.

1.2   CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.2.1   HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION (HET)

The concept of transformation in the context of higher education in South Africa implies the change of nature, function, and condition of the higher education system to be consistent with the demands of the new social order (NCHE, 1996:

9). Fundamentally, transformation must address the historic inequalities and inefficiencies in the system, and promote the principles of equity and quality assurance across all levels of higher education.

1.2.2 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs)

These are institutions of higher learning such as universities and technikons that fall within the competence and authority of the national Department of Education (DoE) and governed by the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 and its Amendments, Act 55 of 1999, Act 54 of 2000 and Act 23 of 2001.

1.2.3 INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

In terms of the South African legislation, institutional governance structures are those structures that are entrusted with fiduciary/trustee responsibilities and the core (academic) business in the best interests of the institutions. These structures are primarily governing Councils of universities and technikons who are supposed to determine policies, influence the affairs and monitor the conduct of activities.

Although Councils must govern the institutions, it is imperative according to the legislation, that they receive advice from Institutional Forums (IFs), and further recognise the inter-relationships of other structures such as the academic Senate. The Student Representative Council (SRC) is another governance structure entrusted with the responsibility of managing student affairs in accordance with the institutional statutes and the constitution of the SRC.

1.2.4 CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE

The concept denotes the underlying objectives of a transparent, accountable, consultative and interactive relationship between the state and its organisations,

institutions of higher learning themselves and other stakeholders that are part of the higher education system as a whole (Education White Paper 3, 1997: 3.7).

Co-operative governance in the context of this study shall also include institutional (internal) stakeholders who participate in the process leading towards policy formulation and decision-making. This position is supported by Cloete and Bunting (2000: 49) when they argue that

> "the principles of the White Paper are based on assumptions that no single actor can effect change in an institution, and that the existence of complementary and competing interests must be recognised in all institutions, and that the responsibilities of different partners in the institution must be clarified, and that new internal structures must be established to promote co-operative behaviour".

1.2.5 NATIONAL POLICY PRIORITIES

South African Higher Education is facing daunting challenges, and in response thereto, the Department of Education (1999: 3) in consultation with universities and technikons identified the four priorities that must be addressed in institutional three year "rolling" plans. These priorities are the 'size and shape' of the higher education system, efficiency, equity and inter-institutional co-operation. The researcher will establish whether they inhibit or promote the bigger picture of quality and quality assurance mechanisms in higher education.

1.2.6 QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality is a concept that is frequently used and interpreted differently in varied circumstances. This study adopts the view of Harvey in Strydom, *et.al.* (1996:206) in defining quality as "exceptional, perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money and transformative". It must also be noted that there is an

interrelationship between quality and standards, and this will be unpacked in Chapter 3 (section 3.3.4).

Quality assurance would be the process of assuring that systems are put in place that will measure and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the transformed institutions of higher learning and their programmes in an attempt to attain quality outcomes. External validation and self-evaluation mechanisms form the basis of quality assurance with the view to improvement and accountability (Vroeÿesteÿn, 1988: 70- 71; Kells, 1999; 216-217 and Woodhouse, 2001: 3).

1.3 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS AND THE TRANSFORMATION IMPERATIVES

This section outlines the legislative issues in relation to the transformation agenda in the South African higher education system. It also serves as a background to the theoretical framework in Chapter 2.

The contemporary higher education policy framework is in essence confronted by two sets of challenges simultaneously:

> *The first set derives from the past. Successful policy will have to overcome an historically determined pattern of fragmentation, inequality and inefficiency, increase access for Black students and for women, generate new models for learning and teaching to accommodate a larger and more diverse student population. The second derives from the present and the future. Successful policy must restructure the higher education system and its institutions to meet the needs of an increasingly technologically oriented economy. It must also deliver the requisite research, the highly trained people and the useful knowledge to equip a*

developing society with the capacity to participate competitively in a rapidly changing global context (Draft White Paper on Higher Education, 1997: 11).

In support of the principles of the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997), the National Plan for Higher Education (2001: 6) provides a framework for ensuring the fitness of the higher education system to contribute to the challenges that face South Africa in the 21st century. Its primary purpose is to ensure that:

❑ The higher education system achieves the transformation objectives set out in the White Paper and is responsive to the societal interests and needs.

❑ There is coherence with regard to the provision of higher education at the national level.

❑ Limited resources are used efficiently and effectively and there is accountability for the expenditure of public funds.

❑ The quality of academic programmes, including teaching and research, is improved across the system.

What appears fundamental in this study, against the background provided above, is whether higher education transformation as promulgated in the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 will impact on quality and quality assurance mechanisms in the sector. Universities and Technikons in this country have a unique history in that each one of them were established with the purpose to address a particular political agenda or perhaps a specific societal need. The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) Report (1996: 1) emphasizes that in order to preserve what is valuable and to address what is defective, transformation becomes imperative. It is on the strength of this that the system of higher education has been reshaped to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to a context of new realities and opportunities. The NCHE Report further focused on the importance of quality

and quality assurance in a transforming higher education system. It made it clear that a

> *"comprehensive, development-oriented quality assurance system is central to the creation of a single co-ordinated higher education system; and that it is an essential mechanism to tackle differences in quality across institutional programmes, and an important element of the new form of governance proposed for higher education"* (NCHE, 1996: 108).

An attempt is made in this study to illustrate how the past deficiencies in the system are being addressed to assure quality in the governance structures of the institutions of higher learning in South Africa. A distinction must be drawn at the outset among the different levels of quality assurance as outlined by Strydom (1997: 195) in a research project on 'The Impact, Influence and Implications of Quality Assurance at Macro- (government, SAQA / NQF), Meso- (QPU, HEQC) and Micro levels (universities / technikons and their programmes)'. The focus in this study is on the micro- level looking at how public higher education institutions are becoming responsive to the challenges of governance and quality in the transformation context. It is, however, unavoidable that other levels will, of necessity, have influences that inform good practice in higher education, including the international perspectives.

As quality assurance is the primary focus of this study, it is explored in greater detail in the section below, and further in chapter 3.

1.4   QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Quality is a core value in higher education, but one about which much confusion continues to persist. This section is a brief background to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 3 of this study. Ball (1985: 1) exclaimed in

frustration, 'What the hell is quality?' as many that are currently working in higher education are grappling with the increasing pressures to demonstrate that the 'product' they offered was as good as that of their competitor.

It is important to mention right at the outset that no generalisation ought to be made about quality and quality assurance; it is often regarded as an elusive concept, just like beauty or justice. Quality is a frequently misused term (Burke, 2000: 218) that should not be confused with the degree of excellence or grade.

The origins and definitions of quality, as propagated by the quality experts in industry since the 2nd World War, provides the theoretical framework of establishing a quality culture in institutions of higher learning in South Africa as it is elsewhere in the world. Can quality be defined in such a way that we all agree? Some have said that it cannot be defined, but Downey, Frase & Peters (1994: 8) believe it can be defined as *"meeting, exceeding, and delighting customers' needs and expectations with the recognition that these needs and desires will change over time"*. The American Society for Quality Control and the British Standards Institute (Johnson & Winchell, 1990: 8; Ellis, 1993: 3) state that quality is *"the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated needs or implied needs"*.

Harvey and Green (1993: 9 –34) have contributed some of the most useful conceptions or notions of quality that are used extensively in higher education, namely:

     (i)   Quality as excellence / exceptional;

     (ii)   Quality as perfection / consistency;

     (iii)   Quality as "fitness for purpose";

     (iv)   Quality as value for money and

     (v)   Quality as transformation.

These notions will be explored in detail in Chapter 3 (section 3.2) to demonstrate how they impact on higher education in general, as well as in institutional governance structures. Chapters 6 and 7 will deal with the analyses of responses based on these notions from institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

1.4.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Quality assurance is defined as "... the planned and systematic activities implemented within the quality system to provide confidence that the project will satisfy the relevant quality standards" (Burke, 2000: 219). Strydom & Van der Westhuizen (2001: ix) define quality assurance as "the process of ensuring that the levels of excellence and the requisite standards specified are met". Generally it means the process of checking that the performance of the whole education and training system meets the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) standards.

1.4.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

A benchmarking approach and analysis of the quality assurance framework in this study takes into account the international trends that inform the initiatives undertaken by institutions of higher learning in South Africa towards building and improving a quality culture in their governance structures. To this end, chapter 4 discusses in detail how the international perspectives in higher education influence the quality of provision. Systems of external quality assurance and the daily practices indicate that internationalisation, with all its problems, is a necessary ingredient of quality assurance in higher education.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The new legislative requirements have done away with the racial classification of institutions of higher learning in this country, yet realistic perceptions remain of the so-called historically advantaged and disadvantaged institutions. This point is also noted by Kells (1992: 138) that South Africa had a disjointed and beleaguered higher education system that served about 300 000 students (in 1991-92) in 21 universities (11 Black, including three in the former homelands, four English speaking and six Afrikaans speaking), 15 technikons (roughly an equivalent of the British polytechnics) and a series of training colleges. The new dispensation in South Africa does not differentiate among institutions of higher learning on the basis of colour or social origin anymore. It is expected of all public higher education institutions to comply with the provisions of the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 Section 72. (4)

> *Councils, senates and forums of technikons and universities which existed at the commencement of this Act continue to exist and perform the functions which they performed prior to such commencement, but must comply with the provisions of this Act within 18 months after the commencement of this Act.*

This stipulation effectively gave universities and technikons until June 19, 1999 to comply with the provisions of the Act, which include, *inter alia,* the transformation of institutional governance structures in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Act.

1.5.1 MAIN PROBLEM

The increasing demand for accountability and efficiency in respect of public financing, trends towards mass participation in higher education (as projected by the NCHE), in the face of shrinking resources from the state; and the intensifying

stakeholder scrutiny of governance policies and practices, education and training processes and outcomes, all are leading towards the increasing implementation of formal quality assurance arrangements within higher education institutions and systems. The formal introduction or establishment of a quality assurance system in a transformed or reconfigured system is intended to ensure good governance on the one hand, and quality education and training programmes at both under-graduate and post-graduate levels on the other. This issue is a response on the growing list of demands for quality on the providers by stakeholders worldwide.

On the strength of the scenario above, the statement of the problem can be formulated as follows:

HOW DO TRANSFORMED INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES INFLUENCE QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION?

'Transformed institutional structures' in this research question denotes those structures that were established post-1997 legislation, and are constituted in terms of the provisions of the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997. This question does not presuppose that there are structures that are 'non- transformed'. It assumes that institutions of higher learning in South Africa have aligned themselves with the transformation agenda and have complied with the stipulations of the Act. However, it also takes into account the different interpretations of transformation, especially as a result of the perceptions in HDI-HAI divide in South Africa.

Similarly, quality assurance mechanisms in the context of the research question denotes a preoccupation with quality. It encompasses all aspects such as improvement/enhancements and accountability of structures of governance. The term 'influence' in the problem statement is intended to elicit the extent to which an impact is made by these structures on quality assurance mechanisms. It also

suggests that implications for the future can be honed in the governance and quality imperatives.

Ewell and Lisensky (1988: 13) are correct when they say that considerable national attention has been directed lately toward improving the educational effectiveness of colleges and universities. Concerns about effectiveness have been voiced by leaders in the academic community and by legislatures, potential employers, parents, and the wider public. Institutions of higher learning are being asked to demonstrate that they make a difference.

Measuring and enhancing quality implies evaluating products and services against set standards with a view to improvement, renewal and progress. It would be a legitimate demand from the state that some form of quality measure be instituted so that it is able to justify the expenditure of taxpayers' money. It should also be the responsibility of higher education to ensure the maintenance of minimum standards and to promote the ideals of excellence. While some quality measures are applied to a part of higher education sector, the challenge is to subject the whole sector to regular quality assessments and to provide incentives for improvement (Figaji in Green, 1997: 286).

1.5.2 SUB-PROBLEMS

The key questions addressed by this study are:
- To what extent have institutions of higher learning complied with the requirements of the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 in relation to the establishment of legitimate structures of governance?
- What problems and challenges emerged that impacted on quality during the transition period especially in HDIs and HAIs?
- How does the transformation of these structures impact on quality and quality assurance arrangements within institutions? What are the perceptions

underpinning the role of the Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs)?

❑ Would co-operative governance bring about the desired outcome of maintaining our higher education institutions as centres of academic excellence?

❑ How well can quality assurance be defined and contextualised within the South African higher education system with a fair comparison with other quality assurance systems in other countries (notably the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the United States?)

The questions raised above, pose further sub- problems such as finding the synergy between university Councils, Senates, Executive Managements, Deans of Faculties, Student Representative Councils as well as other formidable staff structures and unions in a mobile South African higher education system. All of the above ought to have a common understanding of the vision and missions of their institutions ("fitness for purpose" and "fitness of purpose") towards the attainment of their respective quality products and strategic goals. However, Dillard (1983: 103) warns us that

> *"colleges and university administrators who attempt to involve campus-wide constituencies (faculty, staff, students) in decision making frequently confront the Gordian knot: under such conditions, administrative decision making often emerges from entangled tentacles of a committee octopus. The growing proliferation of committees to allow for democratic involvement of personnel [and students] in university governance has lengthened the time necessary for decision making".*

These are the issues that the thesis seeks to address in a fast- paced higher education setting undergoing significant reconfiguration. Consequently, the influence that the structures of governance will make or not make will demonstrate an impact in different institutional types.

1.6 HYPOTHESIS

On the strength of the above, the following hypothetical statement is constructed in response to the research question: **How do transformed institutional governance structures influence quality assurance mechanisms in South African Higher Education?**

It is hypothesised that transformed institutional governance structures do influence QA mechanisms albeit dependent on the historical classification of institutions as outlined in Chapter 6. This implies that HAIs and HDIs (emerging-stable institutions, uncertain-unstable institutions, entrepreneurial-expanding and traditional-elite institutions) as defined by Cloete & Bunting (2000: 56) have their quality assurance mechanisms affected differentially. The reason for this differential impact stems from the historic inequalities in the system, which post-1997 expects all institutions to have similar structural arrangements as well as fulfilling the quality assurance mandate.

While acknowledging the historic (racial) classification of institutions of higher learning, the study attempts to move away from this focus, and adds a dimension that is non-racial and yet appropriate to the circumstances of the different institutional types mentioned above. There has to be a way and a starting point to shift the mindset from the past imbalances, and focus on the future outlook of the reconfigured HEIs in South Africa.

1.7 AIMS OF THE STUDY

1.7.1 SPECIFIC AIM

The aim of this study is to establish the extent to which the post-1997 transformed institutional governing structures are influencing the quality

assurance agenda with the view to improvement and accountability. This aim attempts to set the basis for the impact that these structures are making towards the promotion of a culture of quality in a burgeoning South African higher education system.

The title of this thesis is, **"The Impact of Transformed Institutional Governance Structures on Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Higher Education in South Africa".**

The governance structures that will be explored in the study are institutional governing councils, senates and institutional forums. The role of Vice Chancellors or their designated representatives are central in so far as co-ordination of institutional responses to the research question is concerned, and it is through them that the extent and importance of the issues raised are adequately canvassed.

1.7.2 GENERAL AIMS

Higher education in this country is characterised by historical classifications of institutions that result in the duplication of programmes, competition, rather than co-operation by institutions, the private-public divide, as well as the binary and sometimes trinary divide.

A limited empirical research will be done to determine the extent to which the unevenness of institutions of higher learning will contribute towards a unified and collaborative framework leading to the efficient and effective utilisation of the country's limited resources. In other words, what are the governing structures doing to promote quality assurance among institutions from different backgrounds, whilst maintaining their autonomy and character? This general aim is in line with the reconfiguration exercise that may change the entire higher education landscape in this country in the foreseeable future. It is hoped that this

study will make a contribution in the recurrent debates of higher education transformation (at governance level) and the development of an acceptable quality assurance system that recognises the different types of HEIs in South Africa that came about as a result of historical classifications.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on **quantitative and qualitative research design** (see detailed discussion in Chapter 5) methods as well as a **literature review.**

1.8.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Firstly, an exhaustive literature study is undertaken that relates to the restructuring of higher education systems. According to Hopkins (1980: 291) background information and documentary analysis relies on records and materials of the past and present. The review of related literature involves the systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem (Gay, 1987: 36). Focus is placed on institutional governance and best practices elsewhere. An endeavour is made to identify similarities and differences of higher education models in Europe, North America, as well as Australia by way of comparative analysis. The reason for identifying these countries, according to an assertion made by Marjorie Peace-Lenn, in Strydom, Lategan & Muller (eds) (1996:4), is that the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, are currently regarded as the major exporters of higher education in the world. The choice of these countries is as a result of their extensive experience in higher education quality assurance as well as their success and shortcomings in the area of QA.

Case studies of the different types of institutions and their approaches to quality will be explored for purposes of international benchmarking practices. These

institutions vary in size from large entrepreneurial to small private HEIs in the countries identified above. This comparison fits in well with the types of institutions in South Africa, and the fact that South Africa has both world class (in size and shape) institutions and those with characteristics of the developing world. The diversity of institutions in South Africa is representative enough in comparison to the examples selected in Chapter 4.

1.8.2 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

A questionnaire was constructed and distributed to HEIs with the purpose of gathering data on how institutional governance structures viewed themselves in relation to the quality imperatives. This method enabled the researcher to collect data on institutional compliance to the legislative requirements, their approaches to quality as well as the extent and importance of the accountability and improvement dimensions of quality. This subject is developed further in Chapters 5 (section 5.2) and 6.

1.8.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Personal interviews are indeed some of the most important techniques used in research because a confidential relationship between the researcher and the respondent develops. This relationship enables the researcher to obtain information and also provide help to the respondent (Kamil, Langer & Shanahan, 1985: 48). The use of interviews guarantees that more in-depth information can be obtained because the interviewer is able to ask follow-up questions or to probe the necessary clarification when the respondent does not answer a particular question (Balain, 1982: 44 and Best, 1981: 165).

Emphasis is placed on qualitative research methodologies and the analysis will integrate both the qualitative and quantitative techniques for the following reasons:

□ The approach will give a strong contextual baseline

□ It will also adopt the stance of insider to organisation, and

□ There could be an unfolding of events during the process of the study, as it is evident with the size and shape discussions taking place.

According to Fine (1994: 31) when the researchers listen closely to each other, and to their informants, their (creative) intellectual work gets transformed as a result of the difference, divergence, and contradiction that ensues. The integration of these approaches to educational research should be seen as complementary to the broader social discourse (Gibbons, 1998: ii; 6, Tierney, 1994: 111 and Waghid, 2000: 29).

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study is to stimulate and promote critical thinking and debate on issues of accountability and improvement in the area of QA. This discourse is located within the framework of institutional governance structures defined in section 1.2.3 above. Much of what has been documented in the quality assurance literature in higher education focuses on the traditional areas of teaching and learning, and this study locates the governance and quality imperatives in the context of higher education transformation in South Africa.

In order to illustrate the journey that is undertaken in this study, Figure1.1 below outlines the research programme that will culminate in the recommendations for further research in the governance and quality interface.

1.10 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THEME ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK: SAQA Act, Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and the White Paper 3

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF QUALITY, NOTIONS AND STANDARDS, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF TQM

CHAPTER 4

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO QUALITY AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOCUS

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY Empirical Research

CHAPTER 6

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

CHAPTER 7

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Fig. 1.1   Research Programme

1.10.1   *Outline of the Chapters*

❑ **CHAPTER 1**

THEME ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

In Chapter 1 the theme of the study, statement of the problem as well as the specific and general aims of the study have been constructed.

❑ **CHAPTER 2**

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

In Chapter 2 focus is on the higher education institutions' structural framework of transformation as outlined in the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997, the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Transformation of Higher Education, and the SAQA Act no. 58 of 1995. Relevant structures of governance are identified, discussed and comparisons drawn from other international systems.

❑ **CHAPTER 3**

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF QUALITY, NOTIONS AND STANDARDS, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF TQM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In Chapter 3 the history of quality (from industrial models) and how it has manifested itself in higher education settings through the notions suggested by Harvey and Knight (1996) is discussed in detail. The principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and the 'conformance to specifications' model are discussed in tandem with the view to demonstrate how they fit into the higher education imperatives and the research question.

CHAPTER 4

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO QUALITY AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOCUS

In **Chapter 4** attention is placed on international best practice and benchmarking standards (with a selection of case studies), and what the South African QA developments are at both the systemic and institutional levels.

❑ CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In **Chapter 5** a detailed discussion of the Qualitative (Personal Interviews) and Quantitative (Questionnaire) research designs and how they can be complementary for purposes of triangulation in this study is outlined.

❑ CHAPTER 6

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

In **Chapter 6** an analysis and interpretation of the results of the questionnaire that was sent to HEIs is made.

❑ CHAPTER 7

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

In **Chapter 7** an analysis of the institutional interview responses is made to triangulate them with the questionnaire responses.

❏ **CHAPTER 8**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter 8 a summary, based on the findings and recommendations that emanated from the study has been submitted.

1.11 CONCLUSION

The inequalities and inefficiencies of the pre-1994 higher education system in South Africa has necessitated a national agenda of structural transformation as well as the enhancement of the best practices in teaching, research and community service.

Following on the recommendations of the NCHE report, and subsequently the Education White Paper 3, the Higher Education Act of 1997 made provision for the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to establish the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) that would be responsible for all quality promotion and assurance matters in the higher education sector. Quality assurance, therefore becomes one of the envisaged cornerstones, and a *sine qua non* of a successful and sustainable higher education system in this country.

The study investigates the extent to which institutional governance structures are playing a role towards the promotion and assurance of quality in higher education, given the background of unevenness and historical classification of institutions in South Africa. The role that these transformed structures of governance play will bring about certain influences that will impact on the future quality assurance mechanisms.

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines in detail the underlying national legislative imperative for the currently transforming higher education system in South Africa. The 1997 Education White Paper 3, set as one of its major transformation conditions, the requirement that the South African higher education system must respond to the critical national development needs. Following on the Education White Paper 3 is the Higher Education Act of 1997, which sets the legal framework within which institutions of higher learning as well as other stakeholders would have to operate. The higher education system is currently at an implementation stage where we have to see if there is compliance, and what are the underlying challenges ahead in this complex task.

The purpose of this chapter is to draw from the stipulations of the Education White Paper 3, the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and the SAQA Act 58 of 1995 together, to justify the need for greater accountability and efficiency in the system through the development of quality assurance mechanisms. The chapter briefly highlights the trends elsewhere in the world where the involvement of the state in the reconfiguration of the higher education system had taken place, and to determine what the competing pressures on higher education are globally?

The motivation for this approach is that the legal framework provides a solid base for institutional governance structures to become aware of what the expectations are, i.e., is the composition of these structures in accordance with the Act and institutional statutes, are quality assurance arrangements in place, are the fiscal requirements, etc. in accordance with the stipulations of the Act? It also makes it possible for the state to make reasonable interventions without undermining the founding principles of the academe, namely, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and a vibrant research culture. Different structures of governance at both systemic and institutional levels are also discussed in the context of transformation.

The chapter also lays the basis for the empirical data analysed in chapters 6 and 7 to show that the hypothesis formulated in this study is in response to the research question: **'How do transformed institutional governance structures influence quality assurance mechanisms in South African Higher Education?'** In order to systematise the discussion, this chapter firstly looks at the historical overview of higher education transformation. Secondly, it tackles the pressures facing higher education in South Africa currently. Thirdly, it provides an exposition of the Education White Paper 3 by giving background thereto, and lastly the governance framework followed by structures at systemic levels are discussed. This discussion is an attempt to demonstrate what the issues prior to the 1997 dispensation were in respect of governance and quality assurance arrangements.

To elucidate thoroughly, the role of the former Quality Promotion Unit of SAUVCA is explained as well as that of SERTEC. An analysis of the institutional governance structures focusing on their powers and functions is extensively done for each structure including the Student Representative Council and the Principal.

2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

The involvement of the state in higher education matters is not unique to South Africa. The tradition that institutions of higher learning should be left to go about their educational business without external interference has ended. Institutions of higher learning are being called upon to account for their activities. In Australia, higher education institutions, as a response to this increasing demand to be "held to account", are being pressed to provide increasing amounts of data to co-ordinating authorities such as State Boards of Advanced Education and the Tertiary Education Commission. The data is generally produced under the rubric of *"efficient allocation of resources"* both among institutions and within an institution's competing departments or areas of need (Ramsey & Howlett, 1979: 58-59).

In the United States of America, the period from 1957-8 to 1967-8 began with a primary emphasis on quality but became the period of the most rapid expansion in the history of higher education. Millard, in Berdahl et.al. (1991: 61), contends that "in this process of expansion, while quality remained a major concern, access was provided to a far wider range of students than ever before". Consequently, the advent of Sputnik in 1957 brought about a realisation to increase the human resource base and the reinforcement of the quality of education, particularly in the sciences, engineering and technology. In both instances above an attempt is made to illustrate the involvement of the state in issues of quality and governance in higher education elsewhere. This is a phenomenon that seems familiar in the new dispensation in higher education in this country.

According to Moodie in Berdahl, et.al (1991: 75) in Britain, universities have been legally autonomous bodies for a considerable period of time. There has been, however, increasing external pressures, and even direction, which might in the

next few years yet further and substantially modify the political reality of autonomy. The creation of the Department of Education and Science and the transfer from the Treasury in 1964 marked the end of the hands-off approach to university finance. According to Wagner in Schuller (1995: 16),

"The era of pushing a cheque through the letter-box and walking away was over. Governments and their funding agencies wanted increasingly first to knock on the door, then to open the door, then to peek inside, then to walk inside, then to observe what they saw, then to ask questions, then to expect answers, then to suggest changes and then to change the size of their cheques if the changes did not occur".

In another sense, Halsey (1995: 302) makes an acknowledgement that:

It is difficult to disagree with Martin Trow that in the last ten or twelve years British higher education has undergone a more profound reorientation than any other system in the industrialized world.

This, yet again is an illustration of the extent to which governments are serious about accountability and transformation in an attempt to get value for money from institutions of higher learning. The South African higher education system is confronted by almost similar pressures, and it is for that reason that governance structures are expected to influence the quality assurance mechanisms with the view to a long term impact in the higher education sector.

2.3 PRESSURES FACING HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

An international perspective summed up by Singh (1999: 6) is that the last two decades have been characterised by a rapidly changing educational environment, which the transformation agenda must take account of. The difficulties imposed by the transition to a democratic society in South Africa are the following:

□ dramatic growth in Technology and Information Sciences

□ globalisation and increased competition

□ demand for wider educational provision and an expanding higher education system

□ demand for a workforce that is better educated

□ a significant shift from an elitist system of education to mass education

□ **concern for quality and standards in education**

□ **demand for accountability** (by the public and the tax payer, by government, by employers, by parents and students, by those who are now studying more and more away from traditional, residential campuses)

□ **declining resources** worldwide from the state for higher education (and the call to "do more with less") (Singh, 1999: 6).

The schematic outline of the increasing pressures facing higher education can be illustrated in the manner that is depicted in figure 2.1 below. Firstly, the government faces a daunting challenge of funding the higher education system appropriately and adequately, and this is evidenced by "the need to revise the existing funding formula which seems to have a number of flaws" (SAUVCA / CTP, 1999: 1- 24). Consequently, the recommendations of the Task Team on the size and shape of the South African higher education system, which seems to be based purely on economic principles rather than developing greater complementarity between the economic and humanising goals of society (CHE, June 2000: 26).

Secondly, the South African higher education market is challenged by private providers of higher education, hence the announcement by the Minister of Education Professor Kader Asmal for a moratorium on the further developments of satellite campus facilities and stringent registration requirements for private higher education institutions (Dept. of Education circular, 1999). Pressures of globalisation and competition also have a bearing in the decline in student enrolments for the entire higher education sector as opposed to the projections of the NCHE in 1996.

The NCHE's analysis followed the UNESCO technique of showing total enrolments in higher education as proportions of the total of the population in the age-group 20- 24 years. In its determination of the participation rates, the NCHE used population figures derived from the 1991 census and higher education student head count enrolment data for 1993 (Cloete & Bunting, 200: 14). It concluded that South Africa's gross higher education participation rate in 1993 was 19%; a proportion which was considerably higher than that of many developing countries, but considerably lower than that of some fast developing countries. It appears now that this NCHE estimate was too high, and this is still a surprising phenomenon since the 1996 census figures for the 20- 24 age group suggest a gross higher education participation rate of about 15%, and the head count student enrolment in universities and technikons increased by nearly 20% between 1993 and 1999 (Cloete and Bunting, 2000: 14- 15).

Thirdly, the declining resources in higher education are also related to the declining government appropriations, but mainly, here it has to do with donor funding for development projects. This trend has been with higher education for some time and is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future. In financial terms, the global higher education sector is sizeable and growing rapidly. It is estimated that global spending on higher education is roughly US$300 billion, or 1% of the global GDP, and growing at a faster pace than the world economy. Nearly one-third of this expenditure is in developing countries and, with

developing country systems heavily dominated by public universities that tend to have low tuition fees; the costs fall predominantly on the state. Any attempt to improve quality will therefore add to higher education's daunting financial requirements. Financial dependence on the state means that funding levels fluctuate with the ups and downs of government resources, and this process is exaggerated by the fact that higher education is perceived as something of a luxury in most countries (World Bank, 2000: 54).

Fourthly, is the perennial problem of student financial aid that has resulted in many higher education institutions being owed millions of rands in student fees (Carolus, 1995: 4). These student financial constraints have also led to access problems in many institutions, and further plunged them in financial crises and sporadic 'financial exclusions' boycotts at the beginning of each academic year (Carolus, 1995: 1-2). The then Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA), now known as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and other NGOs have been at the centre stage of alleviating this crisis over a number of years. This, however, remains a pressure that continues to strangle elements of good practice in higher education with a concomitant effect to the provision of quality programmes and staff attrition rates soaring in some institutions.

The fifth pressure is the growing demand and dependence on information technology, a development that is challenging traditional modes of instruction in higher education.
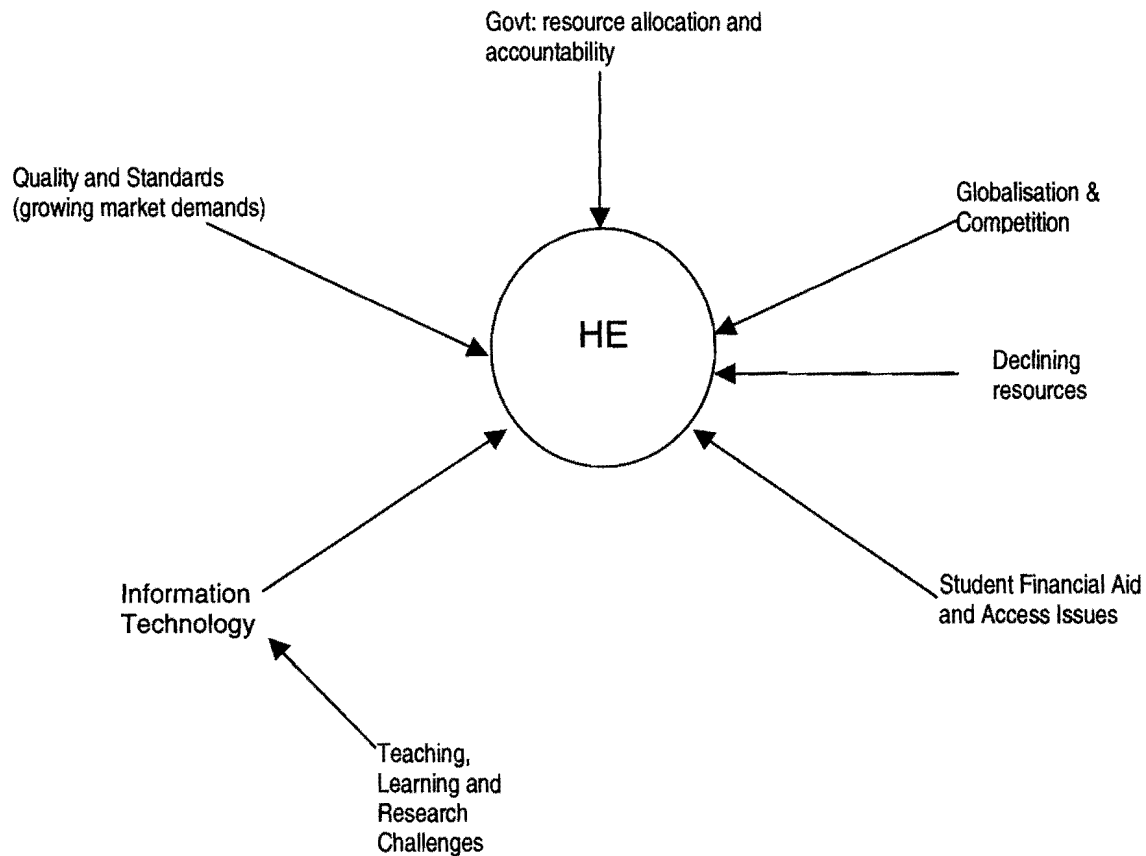
Figure 2.1   Increasing Pressures on higher education.

According to Donovan and Macklin (1999: 10),

> "colleges and universities everywhere are under pressure to make effective use of technology in teaching and learning. This pressure has many sources. Students increasingly arrive on campus, computer in tow, expecting information, services, and course material to be available online".

Added to this, is the rush to add distance learning offerings to remain competitive in a rapidly changing educational marketplace. Information technology is undoubtedly a huge expense that exacerbates the pressure on these institutions.

Finally, is the fact that the institutionalisation of quality and quality assurance is firmly on the agenda of higher education the world over. In this country for example, the national policy initiatives make it imperative for the implementation of quality throughout the system. This is in response to the framework for transformation. This pressure forms the theme of this research, and hopefully will make a contribution in response to the research question: "How do transformed institutional structures influence quality assurance mechanisms in South African higher education?"

2.4   EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 3: *A PROGRAMME FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, 1997.*

The transformation agenda for institutions of higher education in this country is outlined in the White Paper 3 (published in July 1997). This document spells out issues of national importance in higher education in general. The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 further endorsed that governing structures must have a completely different outlook both at institutional and systemic levels. For purposes of this study we shall focus mainly on the prescriptions of the Act and the agenda outlined in the White Paper 3 in as far as quality assurance in higher education goes.

2.4.1 BACKGROUND FOR THE WHITE PAPER 3

As a sequel to the NCHE report, the White Paper also identified among other issues, quality as a critical factor for the restructuring of higher education. The White Paper states the following:

> *The pursuit of the principle of quality means maintaining and applying academic and educational standards, both in the sense of specific expectations and requirements that should be complied with, and in the*

sense of ideals of excellence that should be aimed at. These expectations and ideals may differ from context to context, partly depending on the specific purposes pursued. Applying the principle of quality entails evaluating services and products against a set standard, with a view to improvement, renewal or progress (Government Gazette, no 18207, p12)

The basis for highlighting this and subsequent sections of the White Paper is that concentration or emphasis, for purposes of this study is on issues of Governance and Quality as identified in the White Paper. Other sections of the White Paper, although they are relevant in so far as the transformation of the entire higher education system is concerned do not form the basis of this study. Where necessary as the process unfolds, reference will be made to applicable sections.

2.4.2 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Chapter 3 of the White Paper 3 describes the framework as follows:

3.1 The transformation of the structures, values and culture of governance is a necessity, not an option, for South African higher education. Higher education institutions are vital participants in the massive changes, which our society is undergoing, and in the intellectual, economic and cultural challenges of the new world order. For the first time in their history, our higher education institutions have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, but they will not do so until their system of governance reflects and strengthens the values and practices of our new democracy. Furthermore, wholly transformed governance arrangements are needed to chart and steer the development of a single, integrated national system of higher education. The transformation of governance in the national system and its institutions is therefore a fundamental policy commitment of the Ministry of Education (WP3 1997: 25)

3.4   Both local and international experiences confirm the importance of governments working co-operatively with institutions of civil society in a spirit of partnership and mutual dependence. The challenges of modern societies cannot be met by either party acting alone. Thus our model of governance must be interactive (WP3 1997: 26)

3.7   Co-operative governance assumes a proactive, guiding and constructive role for government.   It also assumes a co-operative relationship between the state and higher education institutions.   One implication of this is, for example, that institutional autonomy is to be exercised in tandem with public accountability.   Another is that the Ministry's oversight role does not involve responsibility for the micro-management of institutions. A third is that the Ministry will undertake its role in a transparent manner (WP3 1997: 26)

As it is evident from above, the institutional governing structures are faced with a myriad of crucial issues from within and outside the institutions. Fourie and Bitzer (1998: 28) contend that

> "*internally, a strong force for change in institutional governance is the push towards greater representivity and participation by all stakeholders, taking into account the principles of democracy, equity and redress.   The dilemma faced by higher education institutions is that the demands for participatory governance are hardly reconcilable with the challenges of greater professionalism in governance necessitated by the drive to better quality, more relevant, and more cost- effective services*".

On the other hand, co-operative governance must not be construed to imply that the state shall have absolute power over the [day- to- day] running of institutions of higher learning. The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE 1996: 16- 18) cautions that "experience of some African countries indicates that the

exclusion of stakeholders such as staff and students from national governance contributes to systemic instability". Instead, the NCHE made a firm proposal that stakeholders as well as people with professional expertise, should participate in policy formulation and implementation. It further endorsed the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy as key conditions of a vibrant higher education system.

According to Strydom (1997: 3), however, many different views of and expectations from higher education abound amongst employers, alumni, parents, donors and members of a broader community. Also, competing views and priorities that give rise to tensions and turmoil can be found amongst those who are currently involved in the process of higher education, in particular, students, academic, administrative and service staff, and institutional management. What seems real, though is that competing interests within the higher education system lead to some measure of instability in leadership and institutional governance. To illustrate this point, each of the structures of governance in South African HEIs are analysed and discussed in subsequent paragraphs, and in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

2.5   STRUCTURES OF GOVERNANCE AT SYSTEMIC LEVEL

The legislative framework for higher education is captured in the Higher Education Act 101, 1997. The Act makes provision for the establishment of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) as a juristic person. Among the many functions of the CHE our primordial interest is on the 'Quality promotion and quality assurance' requirements as outlined in the Higher Education Act (1997: 10-12): section 7:

"(1)   The CHE must establish the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) as a permanent committee to perform the quality promotion and quality assurance functions

(2)   The CHE and the HEQC must comply with the policies and criteria formulated in the SAQA Act 1995 (Act 58 of 1995) section 5(1)(a)(ii)

(3)   The HEQC may, with the concurrence of the CHE, delegate any quality promotion and quality assurance functions to other appropriate bodies capable of performing such functions".

It is clear from above that, among other responsibilities, the CHE through the HEQC must put mechanisms in place that will (a) promote QA in higher education, (b) audit the QA mechanisms that are in operation within HE institutions, and (c) accredit programme offerings throughout the HE sector. Additionally, the National Plan for Higher Education is requesting the HEQC to review the quality of post-graduate programmes as a matter of priority, and also enhance research output and quality in partnership with research councils/foundations (NPHE, 2001:77).

2.5.1 THE QUALITY PROMOTION UNIT OF SAUVCA

Currently, the quality arrangements in higher education differ remarkably as a result of the binary divide pertaining in the system. Universities and Technikons have different approaches to quality assurance mechanisms. In the case of universities, each institution acts as its own accreditation and certification body in terms of its private act through which it was established. It was only recently, in the history of universities in this country that the South African Universities Vice Chancellors Association (SAUVCA), established the Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) whose purpose was to assist universities in conducting productive institutional self- evaluation at different levels, and creating a basis for development in the HE system. (QPU Audit Manual 1997: 5- 6). The QPU of

SAUVCA was short-lived and has since been replaced by the SAUVCA National Quality Assurance Forum (SNQAF), which was formally established in 2001.

2.5.2 CERTIFICATION COUNCIL FOR TECHNIKON EDUCATION (SERTEC)

Technikons on the other hand were subjected to the policies and practices concerning quality laid down by SERTEC (Certification Council for Technikon Education Act 88 of 1986), which functioned as a statutory accreditation body for technikon education in South Africa until August 2001. The SERTEC Manual for the Evaluation of Standards at Technikons (1995: 51) describes the evaluation methods to be followed by the visiting committees and how they could be validated if necessary.

The scenario described above makes it imperative for the higher education environment to be transformed if quality improvement efforts are to be successful, as it is also argued by Chaffee and Sherr (1992: 16). This pattern of the binary line is also prevalent in the British higher education system where universities and non- university institutions have very different backgrounds and experiences of quality assurance (Loder 1990: 5).

2.5.3 THE HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY COMMITTEE (HEQC)

A striking similarity to the South African situation as highlighted by Webb in Green (ed) (1995: 46) in the UK, was the establishment of the new Academic Audit Unit (AAU) by the Committee of Vice- Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) that formally became operational in 1990. Within two years the Unit had been subsumed into a larger organisation with a wider remit, and covering the whole of the higher education system. In July 1992, following the changes made in the landscape of the higher education system by the Further and Higher Education Act, the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) formally came into being to

serve as a prime focus for activity concerned with maintaining and enhancing quality.

The journey charted by the quality audit between 1990 and 1992 was interesting and taxing; academic auditors, at least for the 'old' universities (i.e. those that carried the title before the 1992 Act) were developing and implementing an untried method for the external review of quality assurance (itself still a relatively new term). At the same time the "higher education system as a whole was being buffeted by storms, swirls and harbingers of change, which would test even the most well established systems and procedures for maintaining quality"(Green, 1995:46).

In the event, the absorption of the Academic Audit Unit into the Division of Quality Audit (DQA) of the HEQC, and the support given to Council by the old and new universities (and other institutions of higher education in the UK) reflected the extent to which the 'old' universities had come to accept external quality audit as an appropriate and worthwhile activity, and the expectation that it was capable of further adaptation and refinement to take into account the different traditions, and still developing quality cultures, of the 'new' universities (Green 1995: 46). This British experience ties up neatly with our own South African experience as proposed by the NCHE (1996:12). This implies that in order to ensure legitimacy and acceptance, the HEQC must operate within an agreed framework underpinned by:

□ Formulation of criteria and procedures in consultation with HEIs
□ A focus on improvement rather than sanctions, with QA not directly linked to funding
□ A contribution of institutional self – evaluation and external evaluation (NCHE, 1996: 12).

The HEQC seems to be committed to building a national QA system in partnership with HEIs and organisations like SAUVCA and the CTP. It sees itself as having a formative role to play in developing a national QA system. It further recognises the complexities existing in as far as the DoE's responsibility of approving programmes for funding, and SAQA's responsibility for registering qualifications on the NQF. Quite frankly, the HEQC is committed to developing a sound relationship between development and accountability in its work because it must operate within the DoE's planning and policy framework of reconfiguring the HE system.

Although SAUVCA is not a statutory body of equivalent status to the HEQC (it is now a Section 21 company), its continued existence cannot be undervalued because it represents varying interests within the university sector. Its role in QA ranges from being a capacity builder to a player in the QA system. In recent discussions on these issues, SAUVCA is expected to mediate between universities and national policy makers (the HEQC in particular); to assist towards the development of QA capacity and expertise in the university sector; and to play a policy setting and active implementation role in the new QA system, for example, SAUVCA should ensure that institutional strategic plans include a quality perspective, research the relationship between QA and funding, establish regional quality reviews, continue with institutional audits, develop generic QA policy and procedures, etc. (Luckett and Kotecha, 1999 : 15 – 16). These initiatives depend largely on how the HEQC views its broader national mandate and whether it can delegate some of its responsibilities to sectors such as the CTP and SAUVCA. The establishment of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) necessitated the Interim HEQC to evaluate the quality assurance mechanisms and approaches in the higher education sector with the view to harmonising the historical imbalances. It is for this reason that a Task Team was set up to do the preparatory work for the HEQC before it was launched in 2001.

2.5.4 THE EVALUATION OF SERTEC AND THE QPU

Briefly, as it has been alluded above, the current arrangements for external quality assurance of South African higher education are the following:

❑ Since 1988, the Certification Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC) as a statutory body for the technikon has been engaged in programme accreditation and recently in the auditing of certain institutional aspects as well. This body has ceased to function in August 2001 as a result of the Higher Education Amendment Act 23 of 2001.

❑ The Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) of the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA), established in 1996, was engaged in institutional units of universities until January 1999 when its activities were terminated. SAUVCA has since established the National QA Forum (SNQAF).

❑ Professional associations are involved in programme accreditation at both universities and technikons for those professional programmes where such associations exist. In the case of the technikons, this is done in co-operation with SERTEC. A Task Team was appointed by the Sub Committee of the Interim HEQC earlier in the year 2000 to carry out an independent investigation of the work of these two bodies. The **purpose** of the evaluation was to:

~ determine the practices of both SERTEC and the QPU in quality assurance and its promotion for possible inclusion into the structure of the new HEQC

~ identify areas of weakness in the practices of the two bodies and to recommend strategies to overcome these weaknesses in setting up the HEQC.

~ highlight issues pertinent to quality assurance and its promotion in the higher education sector which the work of the two bodies has identified.

~ Identify elements from the current quality assurance as being developed by the interim HEQC (CHE / IHEQC, 2000: 6).

The Task Team undertook this investigation with the full knowledge that the South African higher education sector is in a state of transition, with many of the reforms proposed in the White Paper and Higher Education Act yet to be implemented. In particular, the determination of the shape and size of the sector and the introduction of new funding mechanisms will be crucial for the development of a meaningful quality assurance system.

2.5.4.1   TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Evaluation was to:

❑ Describe the rationale, principles and assumptions underpinning the establishment and working of SERTEC and the QPU

❑ Identify clearly the goals of each of the bodies and how these have evolved

❑ Explore the appropriateness of all of the above for the future, particularly in relation to the Higher Education Act and White Paper, the challenges facing the higher education sector, and the potential operation of the HEQC

❑ Determine, insofar as is possible, the extent to which the goals of each of the bodies have been achieved, and identify examples of the impact the bodies have had on particular institutions or programmes

❑ Suggest ways in which SERTEC and the QPU might have achieved greater impact

❑ Describe the governance and operation of each of the bodies, including financing arrangements, and identify strengths and weaknesses.   It understood that the QPU has been closed but believed that valuable lessons could be learned from the experience of the QPU

❑ Make recommendations to the CHE, on the basis of the above analysis, about the rationale, principles, assumptions, goals and operations of a future HEQC.

In preparation for the evaluation, both SERTEC and the QPU were requested to prepare self-evaluation reports, which covers as many as possible of the above terms of reference.   The evaluation should make full use of existing

documentation on, and evaluations of, SERTEC and the QPU, and should not unnecessarily repeat work already done (CHE / IHEQC, 2000: 47).

2.5.4.2 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF SERTEC AND QPU

In this section the main strengths and weaknesses of SERTEC and QPU are summarised. The Evaluation Report classifies the process under the following broad headings: **conceptual issues** - how strategies were implemented and methods applied in practice; and **outcome issues** - what appear to have been the main outcome of the work of the two bodies, both for the higher education community and the wider society. In considering their strengths and weaknesses, emphasis was placed on the very different histories and contexts of the work of SERTEC and QPU.

In considering their respective strengths and weaknesses together in a single section, there is a sense in which neither body is done justice by taking insufficient account of the very different problems they were confronted with. It is important, however, to bring the two sets of experience together in order that the lessons learned from them can contribute to the establishment of a successful unified system of quality assurance over the next few years. However, because the differences between them are so large, a short reminder of the separate histories of the two organisations is desirable.

SERTEC was established as statutory body in 1986, initially a certification council. It issued certificates to candidates from technikons on the basis of compliance with norms and standards prescribed by the Council. However, in 1993 an amendment to the SERTEC statutes turned it into an accreditation body for programmes offered by technikons and agricultural colleges. SERTEC set norms and standards for examinations, established regulations for such matters as laboratories, examinations, staff qualifications, experiential training, programme evaluation, and credit transfer (CHE / IHEQC, 2000:33).

SERTEC conducted accreditation of programmes utilizing a two-stage method of self-evaluation and external peer review. The latter placed considerable emphasis upon contributions from industry and the professions. In 1996, further changes were made, with more importance being given to institutional self-evaluation and the promotion of a conception of quality as "fitness for purpose". The hallmarks of the SERTEC approach were certification, accreditation of programmes, minimum standards, accountability, and stakeholder involvement. SERTEC has existed for over 15 years.

The QPU was set up in 1996 by the then Committee of University Principals. It was a body owned by the universities who had established it in response to a mixture of local pressures and international trends. It engaged in a process of institutional audits, which emphasised the formative and developmental aspects of quality assurance. Its focus was on quality management systems rather than quality per se, and it saw quality in relation to the objectives of the institutions and their own definitions of quality. Like SERTEC, it employed a two-stage process of self-evaluation and external peer review; but unlike SERTEC, its focus was firmly at the institutional rather than the programme level. The QPU existed for fewer than four years.

2.5.4.3 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SERTEC-QPU AUDIT

The experiences gained from the work of SERTEC and the QPU will provide many insights and lessons for years to come. It will be important for the HEQC to bear them in mind at all times. Below are a number of lessons which are important and timely at this early stage of the HEQC's development.

There are six principal lessons:
- Avoid trying to operate the HEQC "on the cheap" with insufficient staff, facilities or funds. Match aims to activities and activities to funds. And if the funds cannot be provided, reconsider the aims and activities. (The state

would have to provide the core funds and that these to be supplemented by the institutional and donor funding). An example of the Australian model in Chapter 4 could serve as a resource from where South Africa can benefit, and avoid mistakes where necessary.

□ Do not try to do everything at once. In relation to the balance between accountability and improvement, a three-phase approach where the first phase is a starting up phase while system size and shape matters are sorted out, is suggested. For the HEQC, this could also be an experimental and promotional phase when new methods are piloted and dialogue with stakeholders takes place. The second phase would be a phase of improvement with particular emphasis upon capacity building in institutions through training, pilot studies, research and development, and cultural change. During this stage, the HEQC would need to be finalising its methodology, developing guidelines and explaining its purposes and expectations to institutions. The final stage would be the full operational stage, which will be able to achieve both accountability and improvement goals – provided that rigorous procedures and competence in their implementation have been built up in the previous two stages.

□ Attempt to do only those things for which there are necessary resources and expertise.

□ Remember that the HEQC could lose legitimacy through a lack of competence within its panels or in its administration.

□ The HEQC will need to be realistic about the resources – including time and competencies needed – available within the institutions if they are to be successful in introducing effective quality management systems. The HEQC will have a major responsibility to develop the capacity in institutions to carry out necessary processes such as self-evaluation and to ensure appropriate follow-up and decision-making at all institutional levels.

□ Temper an awareness of theoretical ideals in quality assurance with realism about what can be achieved in present circumstances. For example, while self-evaluation holds out the promise of effective improvement-orientated

quality assurance in time, recognise that institutions have not yet gained the expertise to do it properly (CHE / IHEQC, 2000: 37).

2.5.5   THE HEQC FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

The policy and legislative basis of the HEQC stems from the NCHE report of 1996, the Education White Paper 3 of 1997, the Higher Education Act of 1997, the SAQA Act of 1995 as well as the SAQA Regulations gazetted (no. 19231) in 1998. In its Founding document, the HEQC captures it vision as being

> *committed to a quality driven higher education quality system that contributes to the socio-economic development, social justice and innovative scholarship in South Africa. To achieve this end, the HEQC will support the development, maintenance and enhancement of the quality of public and private higher education provision in order to enable a range of stakeholders to benefit from effective higher education and training. The central objective of the HEQC is to ensure that providers deliver high quality, cost effective education and training, and research which produces socially useful and enriching knowledge and skills as well as employable graduates. The policies and programmes of the HEQC will be guided by the above commitments and objectives* (CHE / HEQC, 2001: 8-9).

Despite the often differing conceptualisations and expectations of quality among different stakeholders in higher education, the HEQC intends to signal clearly its understanding of quality in order to:

❑ Allow providers to engage with and operationalise such understandings within their own institutional contexts and missions.

❑ Provide stakeholders with a framework within which to make judgements about the quality of higher education and training.

❑ Enable the HEQC itself to develop the appropriate policy and procedures for the ETQA responsibilities of the CHE.

The Founding Document (2001: 14) goes on further to say that the HEQC will develop a quality assurance framework and criteria based on:

(i) Fitness for purpose in the context of mission differentiation of institutions within a national framework.

(ii) Value for money judged not only in terms of labour market responsiveness or cost recovery but also in relation to the full range of higher education purposes set out in the White Paper on Education.

(iii) Transformation in the sense of developing the personal capabilities of individual learners as well as advancing the agenda for social change.

External judgements about the achievements of quality in respect of the above will be based on a rigorous but flexible approach, which takes into account different degrees of emphasis on the above elements as well as different approaches to their achievement. All of the above will be located within a **fitness of purpose** framework based on national goals, priorities and targets (CHE / IHEQC, 2000: 7-8).

The relevance of this discussion to the thesis of this study is that the implications of this evaluation, informs the current QA practices across the higher education sector. The scenario above demonstrated what the governance and quality assurance arrangements were prior to the 1997 legislation, and what the HEQC's approach to quality in the system is. It is evident that the governance structures are required to influence the quality assurance and quality enhancement initiatives by ensuring human resources capacity, financing and the development of quality management systems.

2.6 THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY ACT 58, OF 1995

The HEQC, according to the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 section 7 (2) is required to operate within the requirements of the SAQA in its mandate of facilitating the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), whose objectives are to

(a)   create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;

(b)   facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;

(c)   enhance the quality of education and training;

(d)   accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities; and thereby

(e)   contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large." (SAQA, 1999: 29).

Accordingly, the functions of SAQA are to (i) oversee the development of the NQF and formulate and publish policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications; and accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards; (ii) oversee the implementation of the NQF, including the registration of bodies mentioned above, national standards and qualifications, and take steps to ensure compliance with the provisions for accreditation, and ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable.

Section 14 of the SAQA Act makes provision for regulations governing the accreditation of the ETQAs, which form part of the NQF quality assurance management system.

2.7 STRUCTURES OF GOVERNANCE AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The recent developments in the South African higher education system have necessitated the entire reconfiguration of the institutional governance structures in the spirit of progress of our nation. Sir Christopher Ball (Eggins 1988: 3) attests to the fact that in a democracy the government cannot be the enemy. It is therefore my contention that the transformation of the governance structures is a 'good faith effort' to bring integrity into the system and harmonise relationships and competing interests within public higher education institutions.

According to Jon File in Cloete, Kulati & Phala (2000:31), South African higher education institutions can be depicted as follows in Fig. 2.2:
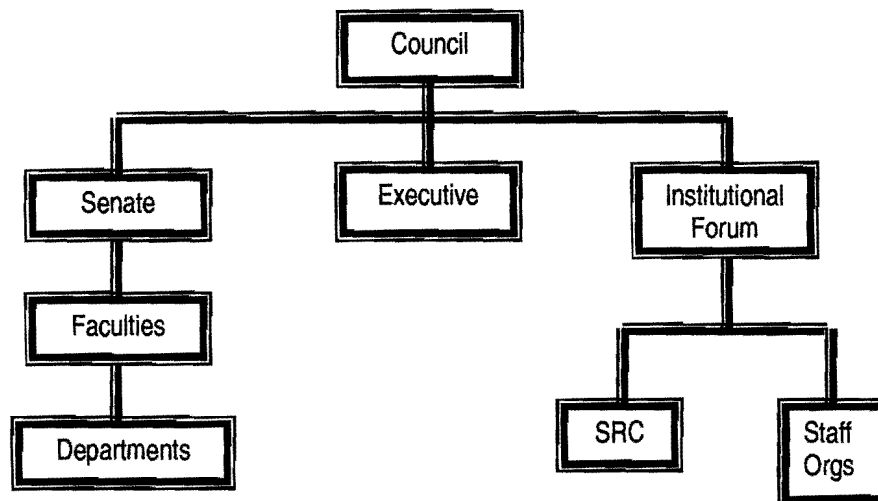
Fig. 2.2   South African higher education institutional governance (Cloete, Kulati and Phala, 2000: 31).

2.7.1 COUNCIL

According to paragraph 3.33 of the White Paper 3 (1997: 31), it is the responsibility of HEIs to manage their own affairs. The Ministry has no

responsibility or wish, to micro- manage institutions, and as a result, Councils are the highest decision- making bodies entrusted with all fiduciary responsibilities. In order for the public confidence to be sustained the composition of councils should be in such a way that external members are in the majority in order to maintain the balance of power and more importantly to promote good governance. Accordingly, the Act specifies that the council shall consist of members drawn from within the institution (namely, students, staff, workers, and management) in addition to members drawn from outside the institution, who must constitute a sixty- percent majority (Ncayiyana and Hayward 1999:3). Every public higher education institution is required to establish the following structures and offices:

(a) a council

(b) a senate

(c) a principal

(d) a vice-principal

(e) a students' representative council

(f) an institutional forum and

(g) such other structures and offices as may be determined by the institutional statute (Higher Education Act 101(1997): 22-24)

2.7.1.1 POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

It is important to realise that the relationship between these structures and offices is of crucial importance to the advancement of the institutional strategic objectives and its core business. Statutory powers relating to the governance of universities and technikons are that councils must:

(i)   **govern** the institution,

(ii)   determine the **language policy** with the concurrence of senate,

(iii) consult with the SRC to **provide a suitable structure to advise on the policy for student support services** and

(iv)   receive **advice from the Institutional Forum** (Higher Education Act 101 (1997):24; WP3 1997: 31).

These identified statutory powers make councils accountable to the state and other stakeholders.   Councils are further required to transcend the sectarian interests and act in the best interests of the institution.   The Act further stipulates that they "must be persons with knowledge and experience relevant to the objects and governance of public higher education institutions".   Kulati (1999: 4-5) argues that the thrust of the legislation with regard to the institutional governance has been on the creation and establishment of structures and practices that will enable different institutional stakeholders to negotiate, in democratic and transparent ways, the various transformation challenges facing their institution.

In relation to the structural and representational aspects of governance transformation, the White Paper is unequivocal that a "critical first step" towards the transformation of higher education institutions is the restructuring of institutional governance structures.   What needs to be avoided is the emergence of managerialism in higher education, as it has been the case in the British higher education system where professional managers, through their decision-making role systematically marginalised the role of academics in governance matters (Harvey and Knight 1996: 68- 69).   Such tendencies do not augur well for principles of good governance and accountability because, according to Yorke (1993: 5), they exacerbate the centralisation of control and erosion of the contribution of academics to institutional policy- making and 'a sense of alienation from senior management'.   The South African model of transformation has benefited from global experiences.   The past discriminatory policies and practices, in order not to perpetuate the same mistakes, have to be done away with.

2.7.1.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

As it is evident from above, technikons and universities possess unique purposes, structures, and traditions within a society that places high value on freedom, the unfettered pursuit of truth, and competition among organisations. The academic institution is like no other organisation or commercial enterprise (Ncayiyana and Hayward 1999: 4). The working relationships among the structures within institutions are of utmost importance in order to foster a sense of collegiality as well as the broader attainment of institutional goals and objectives.

Governing councils, as it is mentioned above, are entrusted with the responsibility of building and enhancing effective and efficient systems that are geared toward assuring the taxpayers and the state of quality promotion across all institutional levels and their functions. A number of higher education institutions, particularly some of the HDIs, have experienced periods of crises that could in some instances be attributed to growing tensions within councils. Meek and Wood (1997 : 37) concur with the White Paper 3 view that councillors must 'act in the best interest of the institution', and not have conflicting roles of either a delegate or trustee. According to Bargh, Scott & Smith (1996:35) the balance of power in terms of decision-making depends on the strength of allegiance between 'management' and the 'professionals' or between 'management' and the accountable body.

2.7.1.3 MANDATED RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNING COUNCILS

Steele (1999 : 9–10; 13) further develops the specific functions of Council members in order to clarify the role of Councillors in universities and technikons. Some of the expressly mandated responsibilities are:

- assurance on academic integrity (process, quality, and ethics). This function has a bearing on the prominent role played by Senate in conducting its business and ensuring council by means of documentary proof that it is functioning effectively.
- approval of academic and institutional plans and policies
- ensuring financial stability by satisfying itself with budgetary procedures
- assurance on institutional structure and practices conducive to sound administration and management
- approval of the process on senior appointments
- approval of senior staff remuneration packages and conditions of service
- approval of any contract of major effect to the institution
- approval of selection and appointment of the Principal and deputies, and ensure paths of succession
- approval of appointment of professorial and senior administrative staff
- approval of annual rates of tuition fees
- approval of appointment or discharge of external auditors
- approval of establishment / disestablishment of academic departments
- approval of staff and student disciplinary procedures
- approval of dismissal of member of staff
- approval of write off of any debt due to the institution

It is however, of crucial importance to note that council may delegate some of its authority to either any of its committees or the Vice Chancellor.

2.7.2 SENATE

Academic senates are generally considered to be the normative organizational structure through which faculty members exercise their role in college or university governance at the institutional level (Birnbaum, 1988: 1)

2.7.2.1 THE ROLE OF SENATE

It is an accepted fact that the academic profession is at the very heart of the academic enterprise. Altbach and Berdahl (1981: 261) argue that the professoriate stands at the centre of any academic institution and in a way is insulated from indirect interaction with the many of higher education's external constituencies. Academics do not generally deal with trustees, legislatures, or parents. Their concerns are with their own teaching and research, and with their direct academic surroundings, such as the department. However, it is essential to note that these external forces have an effect on the academic profession. The rich tradition from which HEIs are coming is that of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and a research culture intended to produce knowledge and a search for scientific or scholarly solutions to the many societal problems and opportunities. The Senate of a public higher education institution is deemed to be responsible for maintaining the culture of quality in its academic programs. The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 affirms the position of senate as being responsible for the teaching, learning and research (academic) and community service. These are the functions that underpin the move towards quality education throughout the system globally.

Senate is, however, still required to report or be accountable to council even though the majority of its membership is drawn from the academic employees of the institution. It is the highest decision-making body on academic matters. The Higher Education Amendment Act of 1999 prescribes that the principal of a public higher education institution is the chairperson of the senate. In addition, the registrar of an institution is required to become the secretary of both the council and the senate. This amendment came about as a result of the debates that took place in higher education circles after the Higher Education Act 101, 1997 was promulgated. It was intended to correct and close the loophole that was created by the Act, so that it is in line with the institutional statutes and private acts (where applicable).

2.7.2.2 THE COMPOSITION OF SENATE

Accordingly, the composition of senate must include the principalship or rectorate, academics (who must constitute the majority), non- academics, members of council, members of the students' representative council (SRC) and such additional persons as may be determined by the institutional statute. It is clear from this composition that the senate has indeed been transformed from the traditional domination by the professorial ranks that were even gender insensitive. It behooves the institutional stakeholders to define exactly what the majority in senate membership should constitute. Traditionally, academic senates were constituted by the professoriate and heads of departments, and the new legislation identifies students and employees other than academic to sit on senate. This point is probed further in Chapter 7 in response to how senate as a governance structure influences quality assurance.

2.7.2.3 FUNCTIONS OF AN ACADEMIC SENATE

Senate is the engine room that is charged with the responsibility of the core business of the institution. It is required to steer the teaching and learning, research and community services functions in a manner that would demonstrate quality education.

In addition, the pursuit of the principle of 'quality', as the White Paper paragraph 1.21 (1997: 7) puts it, is to maintain and apply academic and educational standards, both in the sense of specific expectations and requirements that should be complied with, and in the sense of ideals of excellence that should be aimed at. These expectations and ideals may differ from context to context, depending on the specific purposes pursued. Applying the principle of quality entails evaluating services and products against set standards, with a view to improvement, renewal or progress.

2.7.3 INSTITUTIONAL FORUM

Profound debates on the transformation of campus governing structures in the early nineties led to the establishment of the Broad Transformation Forums (BTFs) in many campuses in this country (Institutional Forums in Higher Education, 2000: 4). What became very clear from the outset were the endemic power struggles that characterise the debates. In some campuses BTFs vigorously wanted to assume the powers and duties of council, including the day-to- day running of campus affairs (cf. Chapter 6 section 6.3 A 1(d)).

Students and some progressive forces on some campuses went to the extent of attempting to replace all or some executive officers (and councils) in pursuit of the institutional political agendas that were prevalent at the time. After extensive consultation the Ministry of Education decided to put the matter before parliament, hence the establishment of the Institutional Forums (IFs) which have the statutory powers in relation to the governance of universities and technikons. This decision has assisted to clear the confusion that characterise the governance of higher education institutions in the period 1992 to 1997.

2.7.3.1   FUNCTIONS OF AN INSTITUTIONAL FORUM

The role of the institutional forum is advisory to council. The Act specifies the parameters within which they must operate. These include the implementation of this [and / or amended versions] Act. National policy issues, race and gender equity issues, selection of senior management into positions, codes of conduct, mediation and conflict resolution procedures, and fostering an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and learning. Given the extent of the complexities in the management and governance of universities and technikons, the institutional forum is expected to perform other tasks that may be assigned to it from time to time by the council. In the spirit of the Act, it is

abundantly clear that the IF neither manages nor governs the institution. It is, however, accountable to its constituencies or stakeholders as identified in the Act (cf. Chapter 7 section 7.5).

2.7.3.2   COMPOSITION OF AN INSTITUTIONAL FORUM

The composition of the Institutional Forum must include representatives of the following:

(a) the management (as determined by the institutional statute or the Act)

(b) the council

(c) the senate

(d) the academic employees

(e) employees other than academic

(f) the students; and

(g) any other category determined by the institutional statute (Higher Education Act 101, 1997, 31(2).

Since the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 makes provision for the IFs, councils have the duty and obligation to consult these forums in a proactive and helpful manner that will enhance good governance. It is also worth mentioning that the institutional forums are permanent structures as opposed to the Broad Transformation Forums, which were established for a specific purpose, and are supposed to cease to exist once the institutional statute is passed by parliament. In essence the life span of the BTFs was intended to be interim. Whereas the jurisdiction of BTFs was on transformation issues, the IFs may handle much broader institutional issues as cited above in 2.7.3.1.

2.7.4 THE STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Another statutory requirement relates to the establishment of the Students' Representative Councils (SRCs) in public higher education institutions. This

structure represents students who elected it, and is consequently accountable to the student body. SRCs, like the IFs neither manage nor govern the institution. It is, however, imperative for SRCs to interact with management on issues pertaining to students matters. Further details of how the SRC functions are outlined in the SRC constitution that forms part of the institutional statute. It is worth mentioning that the Students' Representative Councils in the university sector have grouped themselves into a body (South African Universities – Students' Representative Councils : SAU-SRCs) that gives attention to broader student matters across institutions. This body interacts with the Ministry of Education and even go to an extent of mediating in campus crises.

Predominantly, students are expected by the higher education system to engage in academic activities and exit the system as positive role models. Although there are tensions and challenges on campuses around the world, it is important for the student leadership not to loose focus of the bigger picture. An example drawn by Kerr and Gade as cited by Bloom (1987 : 341) from an American experience is that:

> *For a time the great moral consciousness alleged to have been fostered in students by the great universities, especially their vocation as gladiators who fight war and racism, seemed to fulfill the demands of the collective university conscience . . . they were doing something other than offering preliminary training . . . But when that evanescent mist dissipated during the seventies, and the faculties found themselves face to face with ill-educated young people with no intellectual tastes – unaware that there even are such things, obsessed with getting on with their careers before having looked at life – and the universities offered no counterpoise, no alternative goals, a reaction set in.*

This scenario is reminiscent of our situation here in South Africa, especially in the post-apartheid era. Students need to reposition themselves to subscribe to the new ethos, the new dynamics, and emerging relationships with managements,

academics, and the state. The relationships of stakeholders in the HE system need to be nurtured in order to accomplish the objectives of the national agenda of transformation and quality imperatives.

Derived from the discussion above and the contribution of Cloete, Kulati and Phala (2000: 31), a much clearer and practical illustration of the governance structure at an institutional level would look by-and-large as follows (Figure 2.3) in terms of the Higher Education Act:
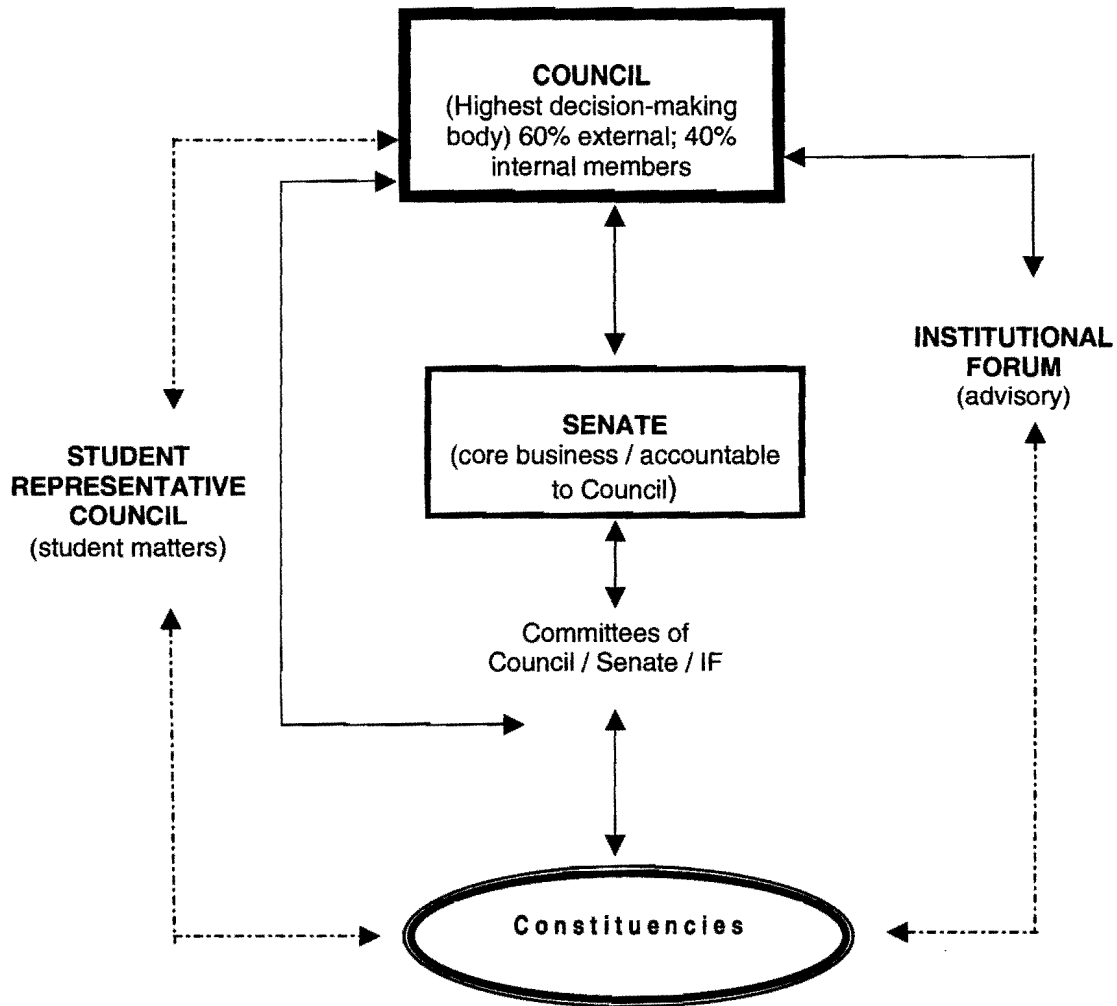
Fig. 2.3 Institutional governing structures and their relationship.

2.7.5 THE PRINCIPAL

Another layer of authority that is crucial to the smooth running of an institution is also identified in the Act as that of a Principal (Higher Education Act section 30: 1997: 26). The responsibility of the principal stretches across the management and administration of a public higher education institution. Sizer (as cited by Eggins, 1988 : 89) is supportive of the Jarratt Report (Sir Alex Jarratt conducted Efficiency Studies in Universities for the CVCP in 1985) that the effectiveness of

a Vice Chancellor or Principal is crucial to the success of an institution. The report further recommends that executive styles of management with clear lines of authority, responsibility and accountability are something to go by in the higher education enterprise. The Vice Chancellor and Principal ought to be considered to possess "positive and decisive leadership" and a "high quality manager of change, of appropriate academic standing". The Principal as the Chief Executive Officer is accountable to Council, and he / she has delegated authority from Council by virtue of his office.

Among the broader responsibilities that vice-chancellors have are the making of proposals to council about the educational character and mission of the institution, and implementing the decisions of the governing body. The organisation, direction and management of the institution and leadership of its staff is yet another responsibility that should distinguish the vice-chancellor as a *sine qua non* for institutional effectiveness and success. According to Warner and Palfreyman (1996: 81 - 82)

> *"The determination, after consultation with the senate or academic board, of the institution's academic activities; the preparation of annual income and expenditure estimates for the management of budget and resources; and the maintenance of student discipline, and within the rules and procedures provided for in the statutes, for the suspension and expulsion of students on disciplinary grounds and for implementing decisions to expel students for academic reasons".*

These are some of the tasks that have a bearing on the quality aspects of the institution that are inherent within the literature on effective leadership. The Vice Chancellor and Principal as indicated in this section is central in influencing structures of governance towards the attainment of the institutional mission and strategic plans. These are some of the aspects that demonstrate the impact that is made on the quality assurance mechanisms.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the policy as well as legislative framework that underpin the transformation agenda in this country. Experiences have been drawn from other countries in an attempt to illustrate that the South African higher education system is part of the global village. It is so because South Africa has drawn from some of the best practices elsewhere in the world, and the on-going transformation agenda continues to influence the decisions made. Experts from the United Kingdom, the United States and New Zealand are contributing in shaping higher education quality assurance debates.

The basis of the Education White Paper 3 has been clarified with the stipulations of the Higher Education Act of 1997. The powers and functions of governing councils have also been alluded to in the context of transformation and what the expectations of the public are from these structures.

Central to the core business of academic institutions are senates. These bodies are in fact depicted as central in the context of this chapter in as far as they are responsible for the quality of teaching and learning at both under-graduate and post-graduate levels. Based on some case studies, an in-depth account of the role of senate in programme assessments and evaluation, as well as accreditation shall be dealt with from an international perspective in chapter 4.

In the spirit of co-operative governance there has to be a synergy among all stakeholders irrespective of whether they are internal or external. The legislative framework provides for student representation, the institutional forum and other internal stakeholders, including the principal, who should collectively endeavour to develop a principled consensual approach to quality enhancement.

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF QUALITY, NOTIONS AND STANDARDS, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF TQM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Quality is at the top of the agendas of educational policy makers, and improving quality is probably the most important task facing [higher] educational institutions today (Sallis, 1997: 1). This chapter seeks to examine what the origins of quality are, and why it has emerged and remained a dominant theme in management thinking since the 1940's (Beckford, 1998: 3).   The philosophy of quality management that so ably assisted the Japanese and the American companies to compete globally embodies principles that could be translated and applied to improve educational institutions and the system of education delivery (Holt, 1993: 22; Blankstein, 1996: 65; Weller & McElwee, 1997: 201).

Although predominantly commercial, initial quality approaches manifested themselves in health care applications as well (Whittington & Ellis, 1993: 58), and fairly recently in higher education settings around the world (Green, 1995: 4-5).

The purpose of this Chapter is to illustrate how the influence of the so-called quality 'gurus' or the quality movement has impacted on contemporary thinking in higher education settings. The selection of these quality experts is informed by their contribution in the principles that are currently used in management thinking in relation to customer satisfaction in institutions of higher learning.

Furthermore, it seeks to discuss the notions of quality and standards as defined by higher education experts elsewhere in the world (Harvey & Knight, 1996: viii), and the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) in higher education. The rationale for this approach is to establish how we can adapt some of the best practices in the South African higher education system to inform the road ahead to quality promotion, management and quality assurance in institutional governance.

In relation to a theoretical response to the research question, this chapter seeks to demonstrate that governance at institutional level is intertwined with management thinking in so far as the assurance of quality is concerned. The notions or conceptions of quality identified by Harvey & Knight (1996) are broad enough to encompass the academic focus on QA. This study brings about an innovative approach by examining the influence these structures are making at governance level, and whether the impact would be sustainable in the reconfigured South African higher education landscape that is characterised by unevenness.

3.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF QUALITY

During the post World War II years consumer demand grew to such an extent that the manufacturing focus in the Western World was on productivity. Effectively, growing markets were starved of products and with increasing economic prosperity, everything that could be produced could be sold. Simply, with unfulfilled demand, organisations were under no pressure to focus on the quality of the product, and perhaps perceived that they had already achieved the ultimate standards. Coupled to this, consumer expectations of product longevity and reliability were relatively low compared with today as was the technology of both the products and the manufacturing process. (Beckford, 1998:3-4).

In common with the developments in technology in the post-war era, have been massive developments in our understanding of human- kind. Through the works of management writers and practitioners we have become aware of many alternative ways of designing and managing jobs and organisations. Managers and academics have collectively failed to embrace the many possibilities that these developments in thinking, make available to us. Academics at universities and colleges continue to teach classical methods because either it is all they know or because they reject the "new" ideas. (Beckford, 1998:6-7).

Those involved in higher education believe that quality is already being practiced. Within higher education a tradition prevails that colleges and universities are the preservers, transmitters, and generators of knowledge and that, except for a few established professions such as law, medicine, the clergy, and more recently the arts and sciences, higher education should not directly relate to the world of business and provide employers with employees (Beckford, 1998: 7). However, Kraak (2000: 152-153) admonishes that "the role of the traditionalist collegiate can easily constrain the growth of Mode 2 trans-disciplinary knowledge". Many members of the academy -- perhaps most members -- still hold this view.

This view, however, conflicts with the opinions held by some involved in higher education. At the most basic level, there is disagreement over the priorities assigned by the academy to the traditional triad of teaching, research, and service. The Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents in the early 1990s, Elaine Hairston summarized the situation as, *"We are buying instruction and higher education is research".* The general public also seems to have greater expectations for the job-related value of higher education than is recognised by the traditional view (Lewis and Smith, 1994: 2). Similarly, Seymour (1993: 25) commented on the relationship between products of colleges and universities and the expectations of employers that:

The disconnect is real between what our colleges and universities produce in terms of learning and outcomes in their graduates and what industry requires. And the longer we refuse to address that gap, like the budget deficit, the more drag it will be on our economy and global competitiveness.

Apart from the economic and social quality imperative, the environment plays a vital role in the quality movement. Clearly, with the exception of fictional characters such as Superman, it is too much to expect any one individual or organisation to 'save the world'. Each individual or organisation can however be expected to make a contribution to this at the appropriate level – that is, their own level and the ones above and below. The levels could be thought of as the individual, the organisation, the stakeholders, the local community, the national community and the international community. The role that is played by institutional stakeholders towards quality improvement and quality is crucial in so far as customer satisfaction is enhanced (Barry, 1991: 5; Lewis, 1993: 95; Weller & McElwee, 1997: 209).

The individual has a responsibility to him or herself and the employers to minimise use and waste of resources in the completion of his or her duties, that is, freedom from deficiencies according to Juran (1999a: 2.2). This must be supported by the institution that creates conditions, which enable the individual's work to be carried out with minimum waste. This principle holds true in higher education governance structures as it does to ensuring that the management of the institution has the additional responsibility to consider the total effectiveness of the institution in terms of its use of all resources and the environmental implications of their actions (Beckford, 1998:8; Oakland & Oakland, 1998: 188).

From these different perspectives, brief arguments could be developed that the idea of quality can be pursued in every aspect of every organisation. In the context of this study, it is placed within the governance framework for the entire

institution. Lewis (1993: 20) and Lo & Seally (1996: 21) believe that "quality improvement will only be successful when all people across vertical and horizontal levels are involved in making it happen". Full stakeholder participation and empowerment are therefore an integral part of the quality process and require the commitment of everyone in the institution to meet the needs of the customers collaboratively (Fields, 1993: 13; Dessler, 1999: 58; Steyn, 2001: 20). According to Johnson (1993: 27), commitment does not just occur, it is built in. Ingredients to improve performance include participative leadership, shared decision making and vision, empowerment, gaining staff's trust, continued training and the development of a recognition and reward system (Guimaraes, 1996: 20). This view is further explored in Chapter 6 (Section B (2j) and Section C 9.15 of the questionnaire responses).

The contemporary quality movement has been dominated by writers whose philosophies, methods and tools have survived and proven useful in practice. They are collectively known as "the Quality Gurus" (cf. 3.6). For purposes of clarification brief reference is made to the works of Philip Crosby, W. Edwards Deming, Armand V Feigenbaum, Joseph M Juran and others, and how their contribution is linked to the institutional governance and quality management and planning, and further how their ideas continue to inform best practice in industry and higher education alike.

3.2.1   *PHILLIP B CROSBY*

Crosby's definition of quality suggests that when he talks about a quality product or service he is referring to one which meets the requirements of the customer or user. This means in turn that those requirements must be defined, in advance, and that **'measures must be taken continually to determine conformance'** (Flood, 1993:22). The requirements may, of course include both quantitative and qualitative aspects, although he targets mainly the quantitative, that is "Zero Defects". The first fundamental belief then is that quality is an essentially

measurable aspect of a product or service, and that quality is achieved when expectations or requirements are met.

Crosby's second absolute is that **'There is no such thing as a quality problem'**. It can be suggested that his meaning here is that poor management creates the quality problems, they do not create themselves or exist as separate entities from the management process (Crosby, 1984: 3). In other words, the product and its quality do not exist in a vacuum, they are a result of the management process, and if that is a quality process then a quality product will emerge. In a nutshell, the second belief is that management must lead the workers towards a quality outcome (Beckford, 1998:52). This view is held by entrepreneurial- expanding and traditional- elite HEIs (Chapter 7 section 7.2.3) that management, on behalf of governing councils, is central to the strategic planning processes toward the enhancement of quality systems.

Third, **'It is always cheaper to do it right first time'**. Here Crosby is making clear his belief that inspection is a cost and that quality needs to be designed into a product, not that flaws should be inspected out. He takes his belief in the potential to achieve quality, that is, conformance to requirements, by developing a quality process and product from the outset with no expectation of failure. Prevention of error is better than rectification (Crosby, 1996: 18).

Fourth, **'the only performance measurement is the cost of quality'**. Crosby (1996: 18) clearly believes that the cost of quality is always a measurable item, for example, rework, warranty costs, rejects, and that this is the only basis on which to measure performance. It is as suggested by Logothetis (1992:85), the 'price of non conformance'. Finally, **'the only performance standard is zero defects'**. The idea here is that perfection is the standard to aim for through continuous improvement, and underpinning that, zero defects is an achievable and measurable objective. Quality is considered by Crosby as an inherent characteristic of the product, not an added extra.

Crosby's principal method is his fourteen step programme for quality improvement which is illustrated with other experts (see Table 3.5) at the end of this chapter. It is essentially very straightforward and relies on a combination of both quantitative and qualitative aspects, a technique that concurs with the methodology employed in this study (cf, chapter 5).

Crosby's "Quality Vaccine" (Logothetis, 1992: 82-83; Crosby, 1984: 6) is an essential part of his process. It is based on three principal ingredients:

❑ Integrity;

❑ Dedication to communication and customer satisfaction;

❑ Company wide policies and operations which support the quality thrust.

Logothetis (1992: 83) proposes a triangle (figure 3.1) of interaction between these three ingredients which must be supported by Crosby's belief in how the vaccine is administered. This again has three strands:

❑ *Determination* – awareness that management must lead;

❑ *Education* – for management and staff;

❑ *Implementation* – creating an organisational environment where achievement of quality is regarded as the norm, not the exception.
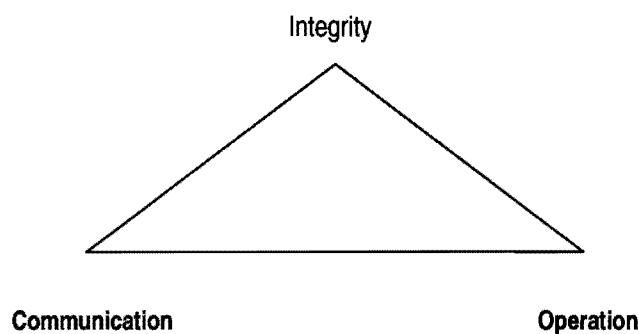
Figure 3.1 **Triangle of interactions (Logothesis, 1992: 83).**

This industrial/commercial model could provide the framework for higher education institutions to realise the inter-connectedness of stakeholders towards the quality goals. Although it cannot be applied step-by-step in higher education

governance, it emphasises the improvement dimension and how it can minimise quality costs if things are done right the first time.

3.2.2 W. EDWARDS DEMING

Deming's initial approach, largely rejected by American industry at the outset, was based on his background in statistical methods. His quantitative method provided a "systematic, rigorous approach to quality" (Bendell, 1989:4). His first belief is that there are "common" and "special" causes of quality problems. "Special" causes are seen as those relating to particular operators or machines and requiring attention to the individual cause. "Common" causes are those which arise from the operation of the system itself and are a management responsibility. He further believes in the use of Statistical Process Control (SPC) charts as the key method for identifying special and common causes and assisting diagnosis of quality problems.

Deming's second belief is that of a qualitative approach to identifying problems. It is suggested by Bendell (1989:4) that this statistically based approach brought its own problems. He reports lack of technical standards and limitations of data, and perhaps more importantly *"human difficulties in the form of employee resistance and management's lack of understanding as to their roles in quality improvement"* particularly in the American applications. Bendell considers that perhaps too much emphasis was being given towards the statistical aspects.

Notwithstanding these problems, Deming became a national hero in Japan and his methods were widely taken up. In 1951 the " Deming Prize" for contributions to quality and dependability was launched, and in 1960 he was awarded the "Second Order of the Sacred Treasure", Japan's premier Imperial Honour.

A third strand to Deming's work was the formulation of his systematic approach to problem solving. This has become known as the Deming, Shewhart or PDCA

cycle – Plan, Do, Check, Action, illustrated in figure 3.2 below. This cycle is iterative, once it has been systematically completed it recommences without ceasing. This is in agreement with Crosby's admonition, already considered, to *"Do it all over again."* The approach is seen as re-emphasizing the responsibility of management to be actively involved in the organisation's quality programme, while Logothetis (1992:55) considers that it provides the basis for a "self-sustaining quality programme". Deming has also developed concepts of management that have a strong emphasis on employees (Downey, Frase & Peters, 1994: 12). These are reflected in his famous "Fourteen Points of Management" that is illustrated with other quality gurus below.
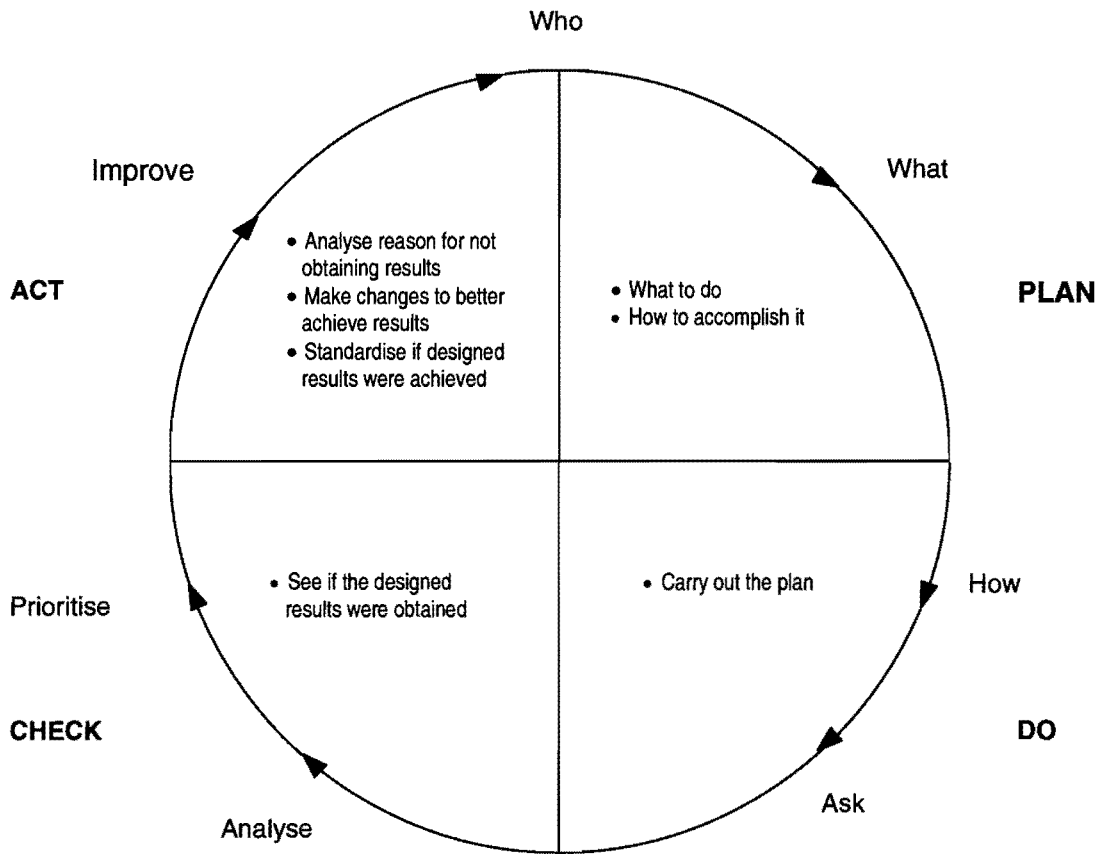
Figure 3.2: Customer feedback process.

Shewart perceived improvement as a continuous cyclical effort based on the PDCA model (Fields, 1993:31, Beckford, 1998:67; Mears, 1995: 229).

Two further beliefs can be derived here. The first, is in a systematic, methodical approach contrasting sharply with the *ad hoc* and random behaviour of many quality initiatives. The second is in the need for continuous quality improvement action. This contrasts sharply with the overtones in Crosby's approach, which suggest a discrete set of activities.

Deming's later work focused on Western, and particularly American management. Here Deming (1986:97-148) elaborated seven fundamental beliefs (the "Seven Deadly Sins") – about bad management practices which he considered must be eliminated before western styles of management could be transformed to support the implementation of a successful quality initiative.

3.2.3 ARMAND V. FEIGENBAUM

Feigenbaum's philosophy is clearly founded in his early idea of the 'total' approach, reflecting a systemic attitude of mind. He saw it as fundamental to quality improvement that all functions in an organisation should be involved in the quality process, and that it should be built into the product. He defines quality as 'best for the customer use and selling price' and quality control as:

> *an effective method for coordinating the quality maintenance and quality improvement efforts of the various groups in an organisation so as to enable production at the most economical levels which allow for full customer satisfaction (Beckford, 1998:87).*

Feigenbaum appears to be suggesting that many quality problems can be eradicated from both the products and the manufacturing process by paying attention to the quality issue from the conception of the idea, right through to

delivery of the first and subsequent items. He assumes that the world is composed of systems; he works with the interrelationships that he perceives to exist between all aspects within the organisation, and importantly, in its environment. His systemic view further contends that the human relationships are a basic issue in quality achievement, which concurs with the developments in management thinking. Bendell (1989:15) states that Feigenbaum presented a case for a 'systematic, or total approach to quality,' and it is argued by Bank (1992:xv) that he was the first to do so. Logothetis (1992:94) suggests that to Feigenbaum, "quality, is simply a way of managing a business organisation", while Gilbert (1992:22) concurs with that and adds that Feigenbaum sees "quality improvement as the single most important force leading to organisational success and growth".

3.2.4   JOSEPH M. JURAN

Juran's philosophy is perhaps best summed up in the saying cited by Logothesis (1992:62) *'quality does not happen by accident, it has to be planned'*. This is reflected in his structured approach to company-wide quality planning, an aspect already met in the work of other quality gurus such as Ishikawa and Feigenbaum. He is considered by Logothetis (1992: 62) and Bendell (1989:8) to emphasize management's responsibility for quality with Bendell (1992:10) quoting him saying that 'management controllable defects account for over 80% of the total quality problems'. The emphasis of his work is on planning, organisational issues, management's responsibility for quality and the need to set goals and targets for improvement (Bendell, 1989:8). Juran's message is similar to that of Deming in that they feel top management must lead their organisations (Downey, *et. al*, 1994: 14).

Juran defines quality as 'fitness for use or purpose' (Bank, 1992:71). Bank suggests that this is a more useful definition than 'conformance to specification', since a dangerous product could conform to all specifications but still be unfit for

use, as it may be compared with Crosby's definition. The final important strand in Juran's thinking is in his trilogy of: Quality Planning, Quality Control and Quality Improvement.

While Juran's 'quality trilogy' of Planning, Control and Improvement offers the guidelines to his approach, his overarching methodology for achieving quality is the 'quality planning road map' (Bendell 1989:9). Recognizing both external and internal customers, the 'road map' (figure 3.3) offers a nine-step guide.

JOSEPH M. JURAN

Step 1   Identify who are the customers.

Step 2   Determine the needs of those customers.

Step 3   Translate those needs into our language [the language of the organisation].

Step 4   Develop a product that can respond to those needs.

Step 5   Optimise the product features so as to meet our [the company's] needs as well as customers needs.

Step 6   Develop a process which is able to produce the product.

Step 7   Optimise the process.

Step 8   Prove that the process can produce the product under operating conditions.

Step 9   Transfer the process to operations.

Figure 3.3 The quality planning road map: Joseph M. Juran (Beckford, 1998:115).

Juran shows awareness of the phenomenon of resistance to change, which is so common in organisations. According to Fullan (2001:31) "understanding the change process is less about innovation and more about innovativeness". It is less about strategy and more about strategising. And it is rocket science, not least because we are inundated with complex, unclear, and often contradictory advice (Micklethwait & Wooldridge (1996); Argyris (2000) and Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel (1998) in Fullan (2001:31-33). This phenomenon has manifested itself in higher education institutions globally, and more importantly, in South Africa during and beyond the period of apartheid higher education. The nature of government regulation ranged from weak state supervision in the case of historically white institutions, to a more authoritarian state control for historically black institutions (NCHE, 1996: 42). Logothetis (1992:75) reports Juran's belief that 'resistance to a technological change is due to social and cultural factors'. Juran proposes two principal methods for dealing with this. First, he considers that all those affected by the change should be 'allowed to participate', second, that 'adequate time should be allowed for the change to be accepted'. These approaches are seen as providing an opportunity for evaluation and experimentation, promoting ownership of the changes and helping to overcome resistance.

The perspectives enunciated by these quality experts fit into the higher education transformation agenda in that the governance structures [and institutional management] have the responsibility to initiate and enhance quality assurance mechanisms. The role that these structures play is in a context of internal and external forces that at times manifest themselves as impediments or innovations that can be explored to the benefit of institutions of higher learning. The transformed governance structures can take cue from these extensive steps and stages suggested with the purpose of quality improvement in councils, senate and the institutional forums as far as possible.

3.3. THE NOTION OF QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Throughout the world, the quality of higher education is being assessed. This involves operationalising the notion of quality in some way, which in turn, requires a clear statement about the concept of quality that is being measured. "It appears that far too often, quality assessment and assurance processes have started by determining how quality is to be assessed or reviewed rather than by asking what is it that is to be assessed" (Harvey & Knight, 1996: 1). *What do we mean by quality?* This question can be asked anywhere, and one would get a variety of responses. Ask it in an academic institution and it could take up to 18 months to get an answer one could live with.

It is worthwhile to have a clear understanding of the quality concept as demonstrated in Chapter 1 (section 1.3). Juran (1999a: 2.1; 2.2) and Goetsch & Davis, (1995: 3) provide two definitions of quality:

> *"Quality" means those features of products and services which must meet or exceed customer needs and thereby provide satisfaction. The second definition is "quality" means freedom of deficiencies.*

In 1991 Wolverhampton University in the United Kingdom embarked on a journey that had no ultimate destination-- travelling towards total quality management (TQM) or continuous quality improvement where you never reach the position where you can say, 'That is it! This is quality! We have arrived!' Susan Storey as cited by Ellis (1993:37). In this long and arduous journey, Wolverhampton University decided to apply BS 5750, the British Standards Institution's Quality Assurance Standard, to all its operations and to register to Part 1 of the standard during 1993.

The scope of the university's application for registration was all activities concerned with the delivery of the product, defined as learning experiences, and

delivered through courses, research and consultancy. The great quality debate at Wolverhampton attempted to reflect on where they came from, where they are going to, what quality means to them, what management means, and what 'total' in this context would mean. The South African HEIs responses to this issue concur with this question in Chapter 7, section 7.4. The debates yielded the following definition of a quality service:

❑ fitted to purpose;

❑ satisfactory to the client;

❑ of a quality grade equivalent to other suppliers. (Ellis, 1993: 38- 41)

The different conceptualisations of quality in higher education were identified by Harvey and Green (1993), and further refined by Harvey and Knight (1996) in an endeavour to demonstrate why quality is regarded as a core value in higher education. The notions of quality can thus be grouped into five discrete but interrelated ways of thinking, namely, *quality as exceptional/excellence; quality as perfection/consistency; quality as fitness for purpose; quality as value for money; quality as transformation.*

These notions are discussed below, and will be taken further in Chapter 7, relying heavily on the published work of Harvey and Knight (1996). The reason for this reliance is the extensive and widely used piece of work that is dominating the discussions in South African higher education debates currently. More importantly, it is with the view to explore the quality dimensions in higher education, and how the institutional governance structures could be advised to adopt the most appropriate of these in order to influence the QA mechanisms in this country. It is worth pointing out that the focus on teaching, learning and research has given impetus to the focus of this study which is management and policy driven, other than primarily focusing on the learner experiences, who form part of the total picture.

3.3.1 QUALITY AS EXCEPTIONAL OR EXCELLENCE

According to Harvey & Knight (1996: 1 -2)

> "The exceptional view sees quality as something special. There are three variations on this: first, the traditional notion of quality as distinctive; second, a view of quality as exceeding very high standards (or excellence); and third, a weaker notion of exceptional quality, as passing a set of required (minimum) standards".

"The traditional concept of quality implies exclusivity" (p.2), in the sense that assumptions are made about the supposed 'high quality' or 'high class' programme or institution without offering benchmarks against which to measure quality. This notion is often held implicitly by academics and policy- makers in debates about quality in higher education. This view hold true in the South African setting in that certain institutions, as had been alluded to in the introductory Chapter are perceived as 'exclusive' [or perhaps advantaged], whereas others are not. The fact of the matter is that these types of institutions influence policy- makers in the manner that Harvey & Knight contend. The slight twist in South Africa is that it is not implicitly held, but is glaring and almost palpable. The Shape and Size Task team of the Council on Higher Education (2000: 25) summed up the scenario as follows

> "... there is a perception that institutions [of higher learning] have in various ways remained largely unchanged from the apartheid past. There is also concern about the quality of the outputs of institutions. Numerous inefficiencies plague the system. Various institutions evince governance and financial problems, inadequate financial systems, the unwarranted duplication of programmes and the lack of optimal use of infrastructure and human resources".

Excellence is often used interchangeably with quality or high standards that are not easily attainable. It is elitist in as much as it sees quality as only possibly attainable in limited circumstances. This notion in education circles tends to focus on input and output. An institution that takes the best students, provides them with the best resources, both human and physical, by its nature excels. The notion of 'centres of excellence' in higher education is frequently based on this notion of quality. Similarly, it is evident from the foregoing paragraphs that the governance and quality interface can no longer be ignored. HEIs that have the best governance structures have a fair chance of excelling in their mandate, and their institutions could be classified as 'quality institutions' in the words of Harvey and Knight.

The final notion of quality as exceptional dilutes the notion of excellence. A 'quality' product in this sense is one that has passed a set of quality checks, which are based on attainable criteria that are designed to reject 'defective' items. The 'pass mark' for coursework and examinations is an everyday example of standards checking in higher education. 'Quality' is thus attributed to all those items that fulfil the minimum standards set by the manufacturer or monitoring body. This assertion attests to the fact that the industrial / commercial thinking propagated by the 'Quality Gurus' has equally influenced the approaches in higher education.

The advantage of setting a threshold is that it is objective, certifiable and uniform across the higher education system. The disadvantage is that it is a static notion: it cannot be easily adapted to changing circumstances except through cumbersome political processes. Therefore, standards almost always lag behind. This implies that the threshold conception of quality does not stimulate units to adapt to new opportunities, incorporate new insights with respect to education. In most European higher education systems, a variant is used that can be called minimum standards. In another view, the Dutch higher education contends that

"These minimum standards are often defined concisely: all that is needed is a broad definition of the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes of graduates. They ensure a certain minimum quality and a certain minimum comparability of units or programs across the higher education system" (Hogeschool Leiden, 1998: 11).

3.3.2 QUALITY AS PERFECTION OR CONSISTENCY

Lee Harvey contends that this notion sees quality as a consistent or flawless outcome. In a sense it "democratises" the notion of quality. "If consistency can be achieved, then quality can be attained by all" (Strydom, Lategan & Muller, 1996: 206). The ideal to focus on process and a set of specifications with the aim to meet it perfectly, is encapsulated by two interrelated dictums: *zero defects* and *getting things right first time.*

The 'zero defects' approach redefines quality as conformance to specification rather than exceeding high standards. In this approach there is a distinction between quality and standards. "Quality is that which conforms to a particular specification. The product or service is judged by its consistency or, in some cases, by its reliability" (Carter, 1978, Garvin, 1988) as cited by Harvey and Knight (1996: 4). Excellence thus becomes 'perfection' as measured by the absence of defects. According to Harvey and Knight, zero defects are not just about conforming to specification, it embodies a philosophy of prevention rather than inspection. The focus is on ensuring that, at each stage, faults do not occur, rather than relying on final inspection to identify defects. This notion also emphasises the quality culture of ensuring that things are 'done right first time', and if they are not, then the process that has led to the unsatisfactory output is analysed so that corrections can be made.

This approach is derived from Crosby (cf. 3.2.1), and is developed for the higher education setting by Harvey and Knight. The fit into this study comes about as a

result of the need to improve the South African higher education system, starting with governance, then moving on to other levels such as management and other forums or campus formations. The goal of this approach then becomes good quality outcomes with less (or minimised) inefficiencies in the institution. This responds to the research question in that the institutional governance structures could strive towards 'zero defects' and 'doing things right first time thereby influencing the quality assurance mechanisms in their institutions with a view to long term impact in the system.

3.3.3 QUALITY AS 'FITNESS FOR PURPOSE'

This approach argues that quality only has a meaning in relation to the 'purpose' of the product or service. It is quite remote from the idea of quality as something special, distinctive, elitist, conferring status, or difficult to attain. If something does the job for which it is designed, then it is a quality product or service. Every product or service has the potential to fit its purpose and thus be a quality product or service. Fitness for purpose has emerged as the fashionable way to harness the drive for perfection. Although straightforward in conception, 'fitness for purpose' may be deceptive (Moodie, 1986b: 1-8) especially when issues of *'whose purpose'* and *'how fitness is assessed'* are raised (Harvey & Knight, 1996: 5).

Quality as fitting-the-customer-specification requires that the outcome of a process match the specified requirements. This requires, first of all, that customer requirements are precisely identified and second, that the outcome conforms to those requirements. This conception is also developmental as it organises that purposes may change over time thus requiring constant re-evaluation of the appropriateness of the specification. One of the most important insights from the quality literature is that an operational definition of quality must always be specific: quality of something for a specific purpose. There is no such thing as 'general quality'.

In terms of higher education, this view implies that, for instance, a study programme may be good at preparing researchers but not professionals to work in practice, or visa-versa. This view implies a conception of quality that focuses on customer needs (largely known as stakeholders in the South African context) – however it may be difficult to define 'customers' in higher education. Students, employers, parents, the academic community, donor agencies, government and society in general, are all customers. A major weakness of this conception is that it seems to imply that 'all systems go' in higher education as long as one can formulate a purpose for it. Accordingly, a 'fitness for purpose' notion needs to be complemented with a notion of the 'fitness of purpose' for higher education. "In this respect, an evaluation can discuss (and challenge) the comprehensiveness and relevance of purposes in order to ensure improvements" (Hogeschool Leiden, 1988:11). Sallis and Hingley (1992:3) warn that "educational institutions need to be careful that they base their quality standards upon an analysis of customer wants and needs and not just upon their own definitions as this may bring about the undesired effect".

"An alternative view of fitness for purpose avoids the issue of determining who are the higher education's customers by returning the emphasis to the institution. In this case, quality is defined in terms of the institution fulfilling its own stated objectives or 'mission'" (Green, 1993). Quality becomes fitness for, and performance in, the market as defined by the institution. This view of quality underpins the approach of "the British government that (post-1992) seeks to ensure that the new funding arrangements for teaching should safeguard the best of the distinctive missions of individual institutions" (Harvey and Knight, 1996: 6).

Institution-wide consultations often result in mission statements being formulated and constructed to fit the short-, medium-, and long-term objectives of the institution. This approach is often referred to as 'fitness for purpose', whereas the

notion of 'fitness of purpose' interrogates the appropriateness and suitability of the set objectives or mission statements for a particular context.

The society or relevant stakeholders may legitimately ask whether such purposes fit the needs of the day. The systemic and institutional transformation process in the South African higher education system is a case in point. So much is happening to the extent that all institutions of higher learning are re-positioning themselves to be in line with the post-apartheid quality assurance imperatives and to be in keeping with the principles of the White Paper on higher education. In conclusion, the conception of quality as fitness for purpose conforms to the following principles:

- ❑ quality in higher education needs to be defined in light of specific purposes;
- ❑ these purposes must be suited to the higher education system;
- ❑ different categories of 'customers' (or stakeholders) hold legitimately different opinions, e.g. academic excellence, institutional effectiveness, etc.;
- ❑ as the primary users of higher education, students are an important category of the 'customer' constituency with varied needs with the advent of mass higher education;
- ❑ and for these reasons, "purposes" are best defined at the level of individual higher education institutions, faculties or study programmes, taking into account the national context.

The 'fitness for purpose' approach to quality assurance is predominantly functional because it relates quality to the purpose of the product or service, and the extent to which this purpose is met. This point is further explored as part of the questionnaire in Chapter 6 and the institutional interviews in Chapter 7 in order to elicit the responses as to how their mission statements support the quality assurance imperatives.

3.3.4   QUALITY AS VALUE FOR MONEY

Pressure has been mounting since the mid-1980s on higher education institutions in Europe, Australia, the United States and elsewhere to demonstrate their efficiency and effectiveness by 'doing more with less'. This notion of quality is considered as populist, and is equated with value for money. In Britain this populist view has linked the quality of education to value for money through the demand for efficiency and effectiveness. Quality, in this context is seen in terms of return on investment. "If the same outcome can be achieved at a lower cost, or a better outcome can be achieved at the same cost, then the 'customer has a quality product or service" (Strydom, et. al, 1997: 206). Furthermore, 'in countries such as Australia, Britain and Denmark the link between quality and value for money has been overtly and controversially expressed in the methodologies adopted for funding teaching which reward quality and penalise unsatisfactory provision" (Harvey and Knight, 1996: 7).

Harvey and Knight further argue that value for money is increasingly seen as a market view of quality linked to accountability. The use of performance indicators, customer charters and league tables are an attempt to operationalise and legitimate this notion of quality by creating a pseudo-market designed to effect change through competition. In Australia, for example, publication linked to league tables is seen as a major incentive to universities. "When we started out, money was the big incentive. But after the first report, some institutions would have been happy to give the money up if they could have got into group one" (Wilson, in Maslen, 1995: 8).

A funding link is seen as necessary if External Quality Monitoring (EQM) is to have any direct impact on the quality of provision, since funding is the single motivating factor to which institutions will respond. On a negative note, according to Filteau (1993: 14)

"the so-called 'accountability-led' view of quality improvement is dependent on the effectiveness of a funding sanction. Without a funding link, evaluations are seen to have no 'teeth'. The link tends to reward excellence and makes no attempt to redirect the resources to enhance inadequate provision".

The issue of funding has become equally important in the South African context with the Department of Education critically looking at the size and shape of the higher education system which is largely informed by the economic imperatives more than anything else. This argument takes us back to the problem statement: "How do transformed institutional structures influence the quality assurance mechanisms" in a way to sensitise the South African higher education system to the considerations of 'value for money' as a quality perspective? It still remains a bigger challenge to convince some HEIs that have been disadvantaged [and are characterised as uncertain-unstable] to speak of economic considerations above the philosophical and sociological considerations in South Africa.

3.3.5 QUALITY AS TRANSFORMATION

Quality as transformation is a classic notion that sees it in terms of change from one state to another. It is firmly rooted in the notion of 'qualitative change'. In the education sense, transformation refers to the enhancement and empowerment of students or the development of new knowledge. A first-year medical student, for example, enters the programme on medical training with no knowledge, or extremely limited knowledge on the human anatomy and why it is necessary to know it in order to make sense of how the training programme fits into eventually becoming a medical doctor.

The extent and intensity of the training programme, including learner-participation brings about a significant change or transformation to the individual who initially entered the programme with little knowledge or none, and at the end of the sixth

year of training is able to be a well educated person who is able to diagnose patients and even perform surgical procedures on them.

This notion can be equally applied to new councillors, senators or even members of the institutional forums who do not understand their new roles in these structures towards quality enhancement. The tensions that are prevailing as indicated in Chapter 6 and lack of understanding of different roles of councillors (in Chapter 7) bear testimony to how the notion of quality as transformation is relevant for this category of stakeholders. This can further apply in different degrees to the different types of HEIs.

Since education is a participative process, students are not regarded as products, customers, consumers or clients – they are participants who need to be enhanced and empowered. A quality education is one that effects changes in the participants and, thereby enhances them. According to Astin (1991) as cited by Harvey and Knight (1996: 8) value added is a 'measure' of quality in terms of the extent to which the educational experience enhances the knowledge, abilities, and skills of students. A high-quality institution would be the one that greatly enhances its students through a variety of learning experiences.

Another element of transformative quality is empowerment of the student. This involves students taking ownership of the learning processes through, amongst others, self-confidence, self-awareness and so on. Harvey and Burrows (1992) contend that students can be empowered via, *student's evaluation* – that is, giving students the opportunity to comment on the education they are receiving. This model has been working successfully in the United States for decades.

A further view on the notion of quality as transformation asserts that

> "The second form of empowerment is to *guarantee them minimum standards of provision* and give them the responsibility for monitoring it, for

example through student charters. Third, give them *more control over their own learning*, and finally, to develop their critical thinking skills by questioning orthodox methods and learning to justify their opinions. In short, an approach that encourages critical ability treats students as intellectual performers rather than as compliant audience. It transforms teaching and learning into an active process of coming to understand. It enables students to easily go beyond the narrow confines of the 'safe' knowledge base of their academic discipline to applying themselves to whatever they encounter in the post-education world. This requires that students are treated as intellectual performers and that any system of assessment is clear, public, and an integral part of the learning process, not an 'add-on'" (Paskow, 1990: 4; Harvey & Knight, 1996: 8- 10).

It is worth noting that students who undergo this process of transformation become better prepared for the world of work, and become better contributors in a learning organisation. According to Longworth & Davies (1996: 76) and Senge (1994:xv-xx) the prominent feature of a learning organisation is that it integrates work and learning and inspires its people to seek quality, excellence and continuous improvement in both. Similarly, Harvey and Knight (1996: 107), also assert that the product of such transformation should be:

someone who is able to deploy a variety of frameworks and to stand outside them; to have a commitment to continued learning and reflection; to be able to do this with high degree of autonomy; and who has integrated this with a set of developed values relating to the self as a learner and as a doer.

3.4 STANDARDS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH QUALITY

Quality issues in higher education are also closely related to issues of standards. It is indeed evident in debates about the nature and functioning of higher education that there is considerable overlap between the concepts of 'quality' and 'standards'. However, quality and standards are not the same. There is a subtle difference between these two concepts. It is not possible to attain a high quality product without high standards; this is essentially so because the concept of standards is intricately linked to the concept of quality. According to Harvey in Strydom et al (1996: 207) "standards" are specified and usually measurable outcome indicators which are used for comparative purposes.

The Pocket Oxford dictionary's (1996: 890) definition of standards is:

> *an object, quality, or measure of serving as a basis, example, or principle to which others conform or should conform or by which others are judged . . . a level of excellence required or specified.*

The Merriam-Webster Thesaurus (1989: 538) defines standards as a "*means of determining what a thing should be . . . benchmark, criterion, gauge, measure, touchstone, yardstick*". From these definitions it can be deducted that standards refer to the degree of excellence required for particular purposes, a measure of what is adequate, a socially and practically desired level of performance. Brennan, De Vries and Williams (1997: 7- 9) pertinently admonish that "as far as "quality" and "standards" are concerned, usage permits no single definition. Many have been attempted before, and many more will come to inform the robust debates about quality and standards". To illustrate the controversy further, the student who is looking for intellectual stimulation and excitement may have a quite different view about quality from the student who is anxious to obtain a qualification without undue exertion.

Similarly, one university leader, in an attempt to answer the question "How might we assess the 'quality' of the whole institution?" might wish to emphasise research productivity; another might look to the scores achieved in the assessment of teaching quality; yet another might refer to the culture of the institution, the quality of the relationships existing between institutional members, both staff and students. It stands to reason, therefore, that quality in higher education is a multi- dimensional concept and any attempt to legislate a single definition seems bound to end in failure.

The same argument holds true regarding 'standards'. Although the term has had a longer and more accepted usage in higher education -- referring primarily to levels of academic achievement -- to such usage must now be added the applications of standards terminology from the manufacturing and service industry. "As with quality, the dispute over terminology concerning standards is also a dispute about values, and the power of one interest group to impose its values on others" (Brennan *et. al,* 1997: 9).

In education, standards relate to three areas of activity, namely:

❏ academic standards;

❏ standards of competence;

❏ service standards.

3.4.1   ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Academic standards measure ability to meet specified level of academic attainment. In relation to teaching and learning this refers to the ability of students to fulfil the requirements of the programme of study, through whatever mode of assessment is required. This usually requires demonstration of knowledge and understanding. Implicitly, other skills are assessed, such as communication skills. Sometimes 'higher level' skills, such as analysis, comprehension, interpretation, synthesis and critique are explicitly assessed.

For research, academic standards are less precise and usually imply the ability to undertake effective scholarship or produce new knowledge, which is assessed via peer recognition (Harvey, 1996:207). In research, most academics are able to identify their peers because it 'has high status and is public in its nature, in its legitimation and in its production' (Barnett, 1996: 152). Brennan, El-Khawas and Shah (1994: 22) hold the same view that:

> *Peer judgements possess a moral authority based on the shared membership, knowledge and values of the peer community. These are most clearly seen in subject-based groupings of peers, which claim exclusive possession of specialist knowledge and competence. Members share a common educational background and professional situation, which is the basis of, shared interests between reviewers and reviewed.*

Silver and Williams (1996: 45) contend that "academic standards, in today's higher education system, must vary. The variation should occur between programmes of study within subjects because of differences in educational purposes and subject breadth, between similar programmes of study across institutions because of diversity of mission, and between subjects *per se*, because of custom, practice and tradition". What they suggested is that external examiners would need to 'operate at the intersection of the national academic policies, the academic standards of their subject area, albeit loosely defined, and the academic standards defined by the receiving institution and the programme of study. Brennan, *et al.* (1997: 115) on the other hand agree that "academic standards can focus on the different stages of the educational process and the relationships between those stages such as inputs, processes and outputs". Educational inputs would normally refer to entry characteristics of students as well as the quality of the teaching they receive.

Educational process standards might relate to student's learning experiences and progress made on the content and organisation of the curriculum. Finally, the educational output standards will be defined by the inputs and processes, and determined by the knowledge, skills and/or understanding acquired by the students. Alongside the debate about the effectiveness of the current external quality assurance arrangements, Brennan (1997: 114) notes that

> "the debate about academic standards cannot be divorced from the broader debates about the roles and responsibilities in quality assurance of institutions, the HEQC and the funding council and, more generally, about the respective responsibilities of the state and of higher education".

3.4.2 STANDARDS OF COMPETENCE

Standards of competence measure specified levels of ability on a range of competencies. Competencies may include general transferable skills required by employers and skills required for induction into a profession. Standards of competence are more often assessed in terms of threshold minimums than degrees of excellence. Obtaining a professional qualification, for example, involves conforming to minimum standards of practitioner competence. Standards of competence may be stated or inferred as part of the taught course objectives. They may be an implicit part of the expectations of competencies to be achieved by research students. Standards of competence begin to overlap with academic standards, when high-level skills and abilities are explicitly identified as intrinsic to competence, as in professional education, where, for example, reflection and critique may be an element in the attainment of an award (Harvey and Knight, 1996: 16).

The relationship between academic standards and standards of competence is not clear-cut and, to some extent, is a pragmatic distinction. For some definitions of quality, such as the "exceptional" approach, the distinction between academic

standard and standard of competence is more pronounced than, for example, in the "transformative" approach. (Table 3.1 gives an overview of this) Harvey, in Strydom, *et. al,* (1996: 208).

3.4.3 SERVICE STANDARDS

Service standards are measures devised to assess identified elements of the service or facilities provided. Such standards may include turnaround times for assessing student work; maximum class sizes; frequency of personal tutorials; availability of information on complaints procedures; time-lag on introducing recommended reading into libraries; and so on. Benchmarks are often specified in 'contracts' such as student charters. They tend to be quantifiable and restricted to measurable items, including the presence or absence of an element of service or a facility. *Post hoc* measurement of customer opinions (satisfaction) is used as indicators of service provision. Thus, service standards in higher education parallel consumer standards (Harvey in Strydom, *et al.,* 1996: 208).

3.4.4 INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALITY AND STANDARDS

The interrelationship between quality and standards depends on the approach to quality and the particular notion of standard. With five "definitions" of quality and three "definitions" of standards there are fifteen interrelationships. (see Table 3.1 below)

Table 3.1

Standards Definitions	Academic standards	Standards of competence	Service standards
	The demonstrated ability to meet specified level of academic attainment. For pedagogy, the ability of students to be able to do those things designated as appropriate at a given level of education. Usually, the measured competence of an individual in attaining specified (or implied) course aims and objectives, operationalised via performance on assessed pieces of work. For research, the ability to undertake effective scholarship or produce new knowledge, which is assessed via peer recognition.	Demonstration that a specified level of ability on a range of competencies has been achieved. Competency may include general transferable skills required by employers; academic ('higher level') skills implicit or explicit in the attainment of degree status or in a post-graduation academic apprenticeship; particular abilities congruent with induction into a profession.	Are measures devised to assess identified elements of the service provided against specified benchmarks? Elements assessed include activities of service providers and facilities within which the service takes place. Benchmarks specified in 'contracts' such as student charters tend to be quantified and restricted to measurable items. Post hoc measurement of customer opinions (satisfaction) is used as indicators of service provision. Thus, service standards in higher education parallel consumer standards.

Quality	Definition			
Exceptional	A traditional concept linked to the idea of 'excellence', usually operationalised as exceptionally high standards of academic achievement. Quality is achieved if the standards are surpassed	Emphasis on summative assessment of knowledge and, implicitly, some 'higher-level' skills. Implicit normative gold-standard. Comparative evaluation of research output. Elitism: the presupposition of a need to maintain pockets of high quality and standards in a mass education system.	Linked to professional competence: emphasis mainly on traditional demarcation between knowledge and (professional) skills.	Input-driven assumptions of resource-linked service/facilities. Good facilities, well-qualified staff, etc. 'guarantee' service standards. Reluctance to expose professional (teaching) competence to scrutiny.
Perfection Or Consistency	Focuses on process and sets specifications that it aims to meet. Quality in this sense is summed up by the interrelated ideas of zero defects and getting things right first time.	Meaningless, except for an idealistic notion that peer scrutiny of standards or quality will be undertaken in a consistent manner.	Expectation of a minimum prescribed level of professional competence. Problem in assessing for 'zero defects'	Primary relevance in ensuring service-standards based quality – mainly in relation to administrative processes (accuracy and reliability of record keeping, timetables, coursework arrangements, etc.)
Fitness for purpose	Judges quality in terms of the extent to which a product or service meets its stated purpose. The purpose may be customer defined to meet requirements or (in education) institution defined to reflect institutional mission (or course objectives).	Theoretically, standards should relate to the defined objectives that relate to the purpose of the course (or institution). Summative assessment should be criteria referenced, although as purposes often include a comparative element (e.g., in mission statement) these are mediated by norm-referenced criteria.	Explicit specification of skills and abilities related to objectives. Evidence required to at least identify threshold standards. Professional competence primarily assessed in terms of threshold minimums against professional body requirements for practice.	The purpose involves the provision of a service. Thus, process is assessed in terms of (minimum) standards for the purpose – usually in terms of teaching competence, the link between teaching and research, student support (academic and non-academic) and so on.

Value for money	Assess quality in terms of return on investment or expenditure. At the heart of the value-for-money approach in education is the notion of accountability. Public services, including education, are expected to be accountable to the funders. Increasingly, students are also considering their own investment in higher education in value-for-money terms.	Maintenance or improvement of academic outcomes (graduate standards and research output) for the same (or declining) unit of resource. That is, ensure greater efficiency. Similarly, improve the process-experience of students. Concern that efficiency gains work in the opposite direction to quality improvement. Provide students with an academic experience (qualification, training, personal development) to warrant the investment.	Maintain or improve output of generally 'employable' graduates for the same unit of resource. Similarly, ensure a continual or increasing supply of recruits to post-graduation professional bodies. Provide students with an educational experience that increase competence, in relation to career advancement, which ensures a return on investment.	Customer satisfaction analyses (student, employers, and funding bodies) to assess process and outcomes. Students and other stakeholders are seen as 'paying customers'. Customer charters specify minimum levels of service (and facilities) that students (parents, employers) can expect.
Transformation	Sees quality as a process of change, which in higher education adds value to students through their learning experience. Education is not a service for a customer but an ongoing process of transformation of the participant. This leads to two notions of transformative quality in education: Enhancing the consumer and empowering the consumer	Assessment of students in terms of the standard of acquisition of transformative knowledge and skills (analysis, critique, synthesis, innovation) against explicit objectives. Focus on adding value rather than gold standards. As transformation involves empowerment, formative as well as summative assessment is required. Transformative research standards are assessed in terms of impact in relation to objectives.	Provide students with enhanced skills and abilities that empower them to continue learning and to engage effectively with the complexities of the 'outside' world. Assessment of students in terms of the acquisition of transformative skills (analysis, critique, synthesis, innovation) and the tranformative impact they have post-graduation.	Emphasis on specification and assessment of standards of service and facilities that enable the process of student learning and the acquisition of transformative abilities.

Harvey (1996:209-210)

The distinction outlined in Table 3.1 above is indeed crucial in higher education. The attainment of [minimum] academic standards, demonstrating a set of competencies and fulfilling measured service standards cannot be over-emphasised. In the same vein, the interrelationship between quality and standards as outlined is largely connected to the academic senate as a structure primarily in charge of the core business of higher education.

Reference to the research question in this study, singles out senate among other structures of governance as fundamentally responsible for academic quality and standards. The question then becomes, 'what role does the transformed senate play in influencing quality assurance mechanisms?'. Although the current senates have been transformed in size and outlook, they are still dominant bodies charged with the task of ensuring that teaching, research and public/community service, continue to distinguish the academia from the rest of the stakeholders in an institution of higher learning.

Structurally, senate has a positive influence, although, as the findings in Chapter 7 will indicate, there is a minority of respondents who felt that their senate was not fulfilling its mandate of maintaining academic quality. This view can, however, not be ignored, but should be addressed more explicitly by the affected institutions.

Finally, the conceptions of quality discussed in this section identifies students/learners, academics, parents, government, tax payers amongst others, as customers or stakeholders involved in quality assurance. In other words, they all have a role to play towards quality improvement and accountability. Quality therefore becomes 'everybody's business' -- whether it is the academic senate or the governing council, or even perhaps the institutional forum, it is crucial that good governance should be evident in South African higher education.

The following section discusses the concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Conformance to Specifications in an attempt to show that higher education institutions in their totality require both these dimensions. This

theoretical framework is probed further in a section of the questionnaire in Chapter 6, and will further elucidate institutional perceptions on the principles of TQM in higher education.

3.5 TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM) IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Over the past two decades two broad models of quality management and assurance have become dominant in quality circles, though it should be recognised that there are variations and adaptations of both models. These are the 'total quality management' (TQM) model and the various 'conformance to specifications' models such as the British Standards Institute System (BS5750) or the ISO range of systems. The higher education environment is continuously confronted by the challenges of threats and opportunities; and higher education institutions defining their worlds in terms of threats have a tendency of engaging in defensive actions, focusing largely on the preservation of the past (Keller, 1992: 48; Jalinek, Foster & Sauser, 1995: 107).

In contrast, institutions defining their worlds in terms of opportunities tend to focus on the future, carrying forward the best of the past and bringing the two together in innovative activities (Seymour, 1992: 24, 42-43). The principles and practices associated with total quality provide a framework consistent with the best existing practices in higher education, but one that allows a positive response to conditions in the environment, viewing them as opportunities, not as threats (Lewis and Smith, 1994: 6).

The starting point of TQM is quite different from the structural and instrumentalist approaches. TQM sees the objective of quality management and quality assurance as part of the process of managing a changing organisation, culture and environment and using change management to align the mission, culture and working conditions of an organisation in pursuit of

continued quality improvement (SABS, 1992:7). TQM thus views all the quality management processes as being specifically designed to constantly challenge an organisation's current practices and performance and thus to improve its inputs and outputs. Part of this objective, for example, entails assessing where and when internal obstacles occur, as it will be evidenced from the last part of the questionnaire responses in Chapter 6.

An essential element of the TQM model is that it is highly 'people-orientated', interactive and participative in outlook. It assumes that a quality culture is an integral and necessary part of an organisation, and that all line functions within an organisation are quality interfaces. This approach further assumes that all members of an organisation are responsible for quality assurance (maintenance and improvement) and thus that quality is not a centralised activity, but devolved to various functional and organisational levels.

According to Roberts (1995: 507- 508), "for implementation of total quality in an organisation, it is usually recommended that there be strong leadership from the top".

The idea is that the CEO (or other very senior managers) grasps the essentials of total quality; sees the desirability of applying them; has the technical knowledge and leadership skills needed to guide the deployment of total quality throughout the organisation; spends a substantial fraction of his or her time on total quality implementation. . . . a few of the applications of total quality to higher education start at or near the top, but many were initiated by that small scattering of faculty and staff quality champions who seem to be found on almost all campuses. The latter applications are referred to as 'grassroots' total quality by Roberts (1995: 507), and he argues that the top-down total quality is valuable when complemented by the grassroots total quality.

The need for such a complement is suggested by the fact that the leading total quality Japanese companies actively encourage and support top-down quality by two types of grassroots efforts, namely:

❏ quality control circles, or local teams, dedicated to quality improvement and the improvement of the working environment;

❏ massive suggestion systems, in which large numbers of employee suggestions are implemented each year (Roberts, 1995: 508).

3.5.1 THE PRINCIPLES OF TQM

The House of Quality framework is depicted by a simplistic approach to building a house. As with any house, the model and plans must first be drawn, usually with some outside help. Once the design has been approved, construction can begin. It usually begins with the mission, vision, values, and objectives, which form the cornerstones upon which to build for the future. The pillars representing the principles must be carefully constructed, well-positioned, and thoroughly understood, because the success of the total quality system is in the balance (Lewis and Smith, 1994: 38).

First, the creation of an appropriate climate within an organisation, particularly with regard to establishing a quality culture and empowering all members to participate in, and take responsibility for quality improvement. An aspect of this climate is the creation of a 'dissatisfied state', i.e., a state in which critical questions are constantly being asked about current inputs, processes, performance and outcomes. Likewise, this entails establishing a "constant, self-conscious process of research, analysis and measurement of needs, requirements and expectations, of feedback, of measurement of results, in order to improve what is done and how it is done" (SABS, 1994: 7).

Second, a customer orientation whereby customer requirements are agreed to, and customers are an integral part of delivery. Regular progress evaluations are carried out in all functions "against identified and where possible quantified [customer] needs, interests, requirements and expectations" (SABS, 1994: 8). The scheduling and timing of these evaluations need to also coincide with processes rather than be tail-end improvements and evaluations. In TQM the customer is both an internal and

external stakeholder and target group, and is the focus of all levels of an organisation's hierarchy.

The third principle is management by research, data and fact. This principle stresses the importance of objective information from which an organisation can generate an assessment. Emphasis is placed on statistical and quantitative research techniques to generate information. Surveys are also a common feature of TQM, but are used in the context of assisting fact-finding. Data generated is then analysed and translated into action plans, indicators, or objectives for improvement. These plans are then compared with previous plans, and improvement is quantified. What is useful about this research technique is that over time patterns do and can emerge that can be useful tools for measuring and predicting improvements. Managing with facts is important because people collect and use facts, providing a common framework for communication in order to understand what is being done and what needs to be done. Thus, not only does it provide a solid base of objective data upon which reliable decisions can be made, but it also contributes to empowerment of and respect for the people within the organisation (Lewis and Smith, 1994: 99).

Fourth, having a people-based and participative management philosophy which stresses 'joint problem- solving, looking for improvement opportunities and teamwork. In essence, according to the SAQA discussion group (25 May 2000) "it must give all stakeholders a role in and a sense of ownership over the quality management process". This entails developing a participatory and inclusive management style and procedures as well as inculcating democratic quality culture and practices.

Fifthly, continuous quality improvement is the ongoing objective of TQM and stresses that an institution must remain cognisant of its purpose to strive for improvement. This allows an organisation to allocate and direct resources to the plans, deeds, checks and actions. "The process for continuous improvement, first advanced many years ago by Shewhart (1931) and implemented by Deming, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is *Plan, Do,*

Check, and Act (PDCA)", a never-ending cycle of improvement that occurs in all phases of the organisation (e.g. admissions, registrations, student affairs, academic programming, maintenance, etc.) (Lewis and Smith, 1994: 95). "This principle is also applicable to internal and external processes and operations, to outcomes and products, and to administration and support as well as to technical or professional functions" (SAQA, 1999: 9).

3.5.2   THE HOUSE OF QUALITY

The metaphor used here to present the basic concepts and principles of total quality is the House of Quality as depicted in Figure 3.4 below. As in a properly constructed house, the major components are (1) the *roof*, or superstructure, consisting of the social, technical, and management systems; (2) the *four pillars* of customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, speaking with facts, and respect for people; (3) the *foundation* of four managerial levels; --- strategy, process, project, and task management; and (4) the *four cornerstones* of mission, vision, values, and goals and objectives (Lewis and Smith, 1994: 83). Total quality efforts frequently fail, according to Deming as cited by Tribus (1992: IV, 20), as a result of the management inability to carry out their responsibilities. They do not organise the importance of systems thinking, and do not have a well-defined purpose and process to follow. He continued to suggest the following ten management guidelines as part of the implementation process:

(i)   Recognise quality improvement as a system.

(ii)   Define it so others can organise it, too.

(iii)   Analyse its behaviour.

(iv)   Work with subordinates in improving the system.

(v)   Measure the quality of the system.

(vi)   Develop improvements in the quality of the system.

(vii)   Measure the gains in the quality, if any, and link these to customer delight and quality improvement.

(viii) Take steps to guarantee holding the gains.

(ix) Attempt to replicate the improvements into other areas of the organisation.

(x)   Tell others about the lessons learned.

The House of Quality
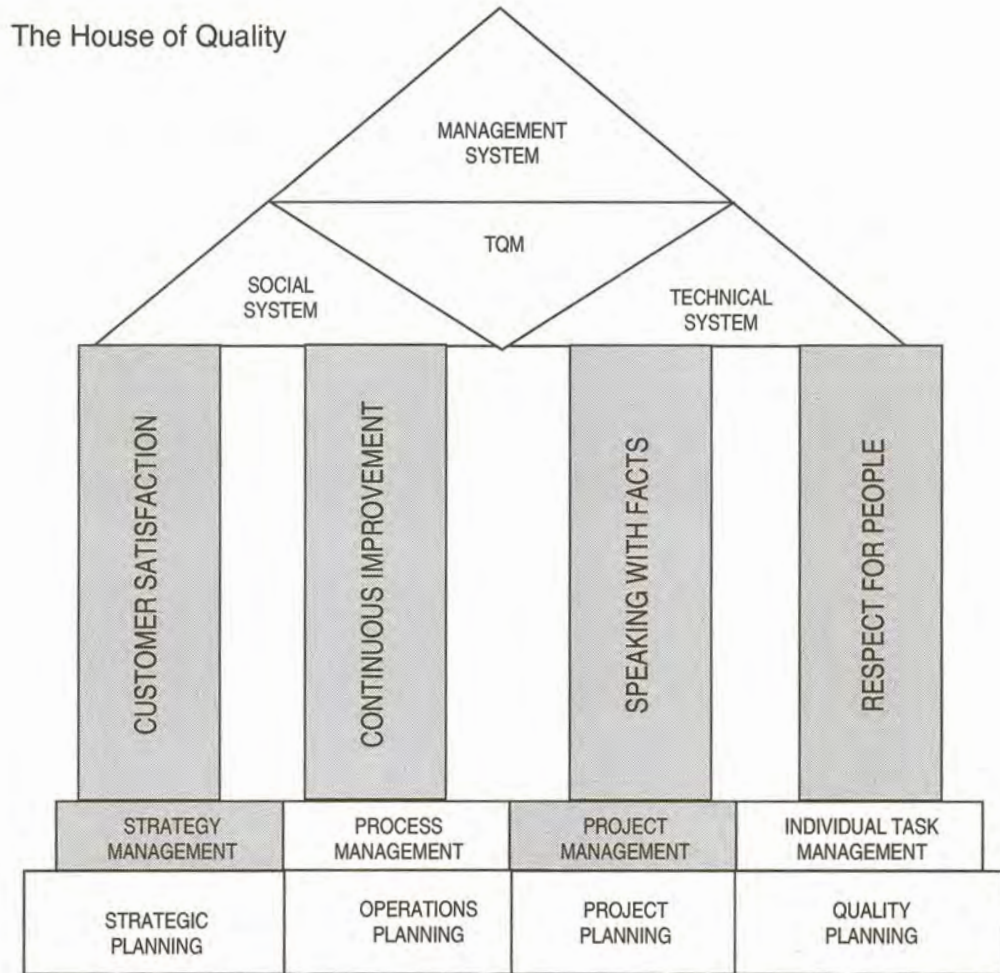
Figure 3.4   House of Total Quality.

These guidelines when implemented will assure success because of their impact on all aspects of the college or university. They are also reflected in the House of Quality, which illustrates the universality of the basic principles and procedures for carrying out total quality (Lewis and Smith, 1994: 84-85).

TQM is clearly a complex, time-consuming and arduous process that demands qualities and skills of leadership and staff lacking in most organisations. It can, therefore, not be seen as a "quick-fix" solution or strategy. It is the most comprehensive and analytical of the models, and is conceptually in line with the more fluid management style associated with market-driven and entrepreneurial organisations.

3.5.3   CONFORMANCE-TO-SPECIFICATION MODELS

In direct contrast to TQM is the range of conformance-to-specification models and systems, the most eminent of which are the BS and ISO (the international perspective of BS 5750 and ISO 9000, 9001-2 and ISO 14000 will be elaborated upon in this section) standards which consist of "a set of clearly defined clauses or characteristics and [describe] a basic set of elements for developing and implementing a quality management system" (SAQA, 1999:5).

The purpose of conformance model is to control each step or a production process so that products match technical specifications. In other words, the model specifies how an organisation's activities should be performing and working so that the output of the organisation is in line with its specifications (as determined by the organisation itself or by a customer).

Essential to this model is documentary evidence, which proves that such procedures have been followed and that quality has been achieved. Each step in the process is "tracked, described and made traceable ... and the documented procedures to be followed are set out in procedure manuals" (Strydom, 1993: 76). These procedure manuals described an organisation's systems, and form the basis of what is assessed. So, it is not the actual practices, input or output (or quality thereof) of an organisation which are assessed, but the conformance of an organisation's procedures to a standard and to a specification. Externally registered assessors who, naturally would have to inspect both the procedure manuals may drive this and various other documents related to these procedures to validate conformance. In short, the conformance to specification model is primarily concerned with meeting and

maintaining specifications, and not with improving these specifications. The main differences between the two models briefly described below can be summarised as follows:

TQM	Conformance to specifications
Is a holistic system that covers all input, output and process related activities within an institution. It also assesses these from an external and internal point of view and through creating internal and external relationships.	Is elemental in that it can be applied to discrete areas of activity, for example, a course of an examination.
Is market-driven, and the customer/learner is central in defining and assessing quality. This also implies that the criteria used to define quality are in a state of flux and negotiable.	From the outset the product is defined and specified. Only through changing the specification can the definition of quality be changed.
Internal and peer reviews drive assessment, though these are substantiated by fact-finding and data-gathering activities.	Assessment is done through third party validation and comparison of records and documents.

The following discussion elaborates on the conformance to specifications model of quality. The ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 are discussed below with the view to elaborate on the difference with other quality management systems such as TQM.

3.5.3.1   QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS: ISO 9000

The question that is often asked is, 'What is ISO 9000?'. This simply refers to a series of quality management systems developed over a period of time. Sprow (1992: 73) defines it by referring to the literal meaning of isos, which is a shorter version of the Greek term for uniform, equal, or homogeneous. It is a deliberate transformation of the acronym for the International Organisation

for Standardization (IOS) (Lewis and Smith, 1994: 274- 275). ISO 9000 began with the launch of the Technical Committee 176 in 1979 to deal with generic quality principles -- the need for an international minimum standard for how manufacturing companies establish quality control methods, not only to control product quality, but to maintain its uniformity and predictability (Stewart et al, 1994, Rothery, 1993 as cited by Liston, 1997: 117).

A Quality Management System (QMS) constitutes a formal record of an organisation's method of managing the quality of its products and services. It enables the organisation to demonstrate to itself, its customers, and importantly to an independent accreditation body, that it has established an effective system for managing the quality of its products and services. Meeting accreditation standards permits the organisation to claim quality certification for its products and services and to advertise the fact (Beckford, 1998: 237).

The ISO 9000 series consists of two sets of documents, viz. ISO 9000, 9001, 9002 and 9003 which deals with quality assurance standards as the basis of assessment, and ISO 9004 which deals with quality management itself. Although the ISO 9000 series was particularly designed for the manufacturing industry, it is being increasingly used in the education sector, especially in the technikon sector in this country. Barton (1994) as cited by Liston (1997: 118) noted that quality systems standards do not prescribe the manner in which a system should be implemented in education and training. There is no indication of what the educational content, processes, norms or performance indicators should be. These, according to him, may be set externally by customers, government, and professional bodies, or internally. However, they do specify what activities need to be controlled, measured, and documented. Where applicable, competencies, performance indicators, standards, and benchmarks are to be identified. It must, however be borne in mind that each organisation would of necessity have its own focus, conceptual approach, creative procedures, administrative structure and method of operation.

Although ISO 9000 and its subsequent series are used successfully in industry, there are some limitations with regard to their general application in

higher education. Woodhouse (2000: 25) contends that ISO 9000 is one such system he personally would not recommend for higher education although it offers some useful ideas and structures.

A survey that has been conducted of the Curtin University in Australia in 1995 (Liston, 1997: 118- 120) suggested that there was little evidence of commitment to use ISO 9000 standards for education in the Australian higher education sector. Apparently this was as a result of little experience of competitive pressure from the education market. However, with an increasing focus on higher education, particularly in the Asia-western Pacific Region, and because of Australia's position in the region, direct competition has indeed become an issue.

Furthermore, as government funds dry up and fees increase, the worldwide trend to privatisation of the higher education makes education provision even more competitive (cf. Chapter 6 section 7a & b). This is a phenomenon that is particularly relevant as open and flexible learning packages. The use of multimedia and other learning technologies appears to attract clients or learners away from local providers, and thus make it incumbent upon universities to incorporate some form of quality management system in their offerings.

Integrating ISO 9001 Standards into a Total Quality Management system using criteria such as those for the Australian Quality Awards (AQA) or the Baldridge Awards in the USA will ensure that:
❑ the customers' needs and opinions are taken into account:
❑ a competitive strategy, including knowledge of the competition, is developed;
❑ the needs of the market are addressed;
❑ procedures (as simple as possible) to ensure quality performance are in place;
❑ performance measures are developed;
❑ processes are reviewed continuously to eliminate waste;
❑ effective communication is ensured; and

❏ evidence of continuous improvement is sought (Liston, 1997: 200).

These elements identified by a combination of the ISO 9001 and the TQM can be applied to the higher education setting in South Africa. The higher education reconfiguration requires the efficient and effective usage of resources and the attainment of quality with 'doing more with less'. Governing councils can, for instance develop performance measurements that will evaluate the performance of councils against certain benchmarking standards.

3.5.3.2 ISO 14000

A relative late- comer of the quality management systems is the ISO 14000 series of standards for Environmental Management Systems. It was launched in 1996 in response to the rising awareness of damage to the environment, and the need for a common set of standards that could be adopted by any organisation. The standards provide guidelines on the elements that an environmental management system should have and on the supporting technologies. The standards prescribe what should be done by an organisation, but not how (Beckford, 1998: 241).

ISO 14001 and ISO 14004 provide the specifications and general guidelines for the series and allow it to fulfil business needs, for any organisation, from general guidance to self-assessment and registration. Achievement of standards is claimed to lead to genuine business benefit with companies claiming process performance improvement, . . . and enhanced public image (Beckford, 1998: 241).

Although no significant link has been made with this series in relation to higher education, it could as well be applicable in certain training fields especially with respect to the relationship of technikon education and industry. According to the South African Breweries publication (1999: 6) "environmental management should be seen not as a separate initiative, but one similar to health and safety, which must be integrated into all business activities." The South African Bureau of Standards would inevitably assess the status against

the ISO 14001 system requirements, and award a certificate of the audit undertaken.

This dimension of quality could be adapted to higher education and the quality debates in as far as the assessment of the institutional climates and the promotion of quality would go. The systems theory of organisations according to Billing (1998: 149) moved the focus from the internal conditions of the organisation to relationships between the organisation and its environment. Similarly, when establishing quality management and assurance systems careful consideration should be given to the external influences that may promote or inhibit the effective functioning of these systems. External factors often cause internal reactions, which in themselves could prohibit the successful establishment and development of quality management systems (Fourie, 2000: 52).

Notwithstanding most education and training providers and institutions' theoretical and philosophical commitment to more inclusive, holistic and participative processes and policies, the same have practically adopted a conformance-to-specification model for quality management (Von Matlzahn, 1993: 24). The conformance model as described has been somewhat adapted and added to by these providers, for example by encouraging more diverse reporting and accounting structures, allowing for a more interactive third-party assessment, and seeking to bring learners more firmly into the loop. However, day-to-day practices are still fairly traditional and predictable.

The debate about quality assurance and quality management models shifted dramatically in the last few years, none more so than in South Africa. The shift can be attributed to new pressures on education and training providers and institutions to become more responsive and accountable to broader socio-political demands; to balance their internal and external obligations and processes; to deliver on the demands of an increasingly global and competitive environment; to increase provisioning and access to education and training; and to create equivalencies to allow for the mobility of learners. These increased pressures and responsibilities have moved the debate away

from looking at ready-made quality management models to the development of models that are able to manage these new priorities, principles and strategies (Singh, 1999: 6).

For this reason, it has been argued by the South African Qualifications Authority (1994) that the 'new' quality management model must encapsulate the following fourteen elements, which can be read in conjunction with the Deming, Juran, Feigenbaum and Crosby's models in paragraph 3.5 below.

❑ It must be designed and targeted at learners and directed at improving their attainment of the necessary standards.

❑ It must seek to directly improve the quality of an institution's teaching and learning strategies. This means equally emphasising the outcome (output) of the educational experience as well as the process of attainment.

❑ It must be flexible and be able to adapt to ever changing demands and circumstances. This means moving away from rigid structures, procedures and bureaucracies and designing more responsive, manageable and creative strategies which devolve quality management and quality assurance responsibilities to a variety of levels, particularly to practitioners.

❑ It must give all stakeholders a role in and a sense of ownership over the quality management process. This entails developing a participatory and inclusive management style and procedures as well as inculcating democratic and quality culture and practices.

❑ It must directly and indirectly involve learners in the quality management process, creating a "feedback loop...and... a working relationship" between stakeholders at all levels and functions within the organisation.

❑ It must develop a system of measurement which proves progress and not simply outcomes or procedures.

❑ It must create collaborative partnerships, both internal and external to the provider and organisation.

❑ It must organise the diversity of delivery and teaching methods within institutions and providers. This entails creating quality systems, which integrate standards and monitor and ensure equivalencies.

❑ It must have an explicit purpose, which is both negotiated and agree upon by stakeholders as well as being public and transparent.

❑ It must have internal capacity to follow up and improve on assessment and quality assurance results.

❑ It must allow for self-assessment, peer review and an external meta-evaluation capacity.

❑ It must be regular and cyclical. Quality management is not an event, but linked to ongoing process which seek enhancement and improvement.

❑ It must result in a formal and documented analysis, which is translated into a clear plan of action for which the institution is accountable.

❑ It must involve both horizontal and vertical audits, participation and accountability.

What is clear from this list is that elements of both the TQM and conformance-to-specifications models are simultaneously identified as important components of quality management systems. This suggests that an integrated model needs to be developed.

One such model, according to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, is the wheel-and-wedge model. In this model the wheel represents the participative management systems which need to be developed in a quality management model so that all staff are given the opportunity to participate in and contribute to ongoing improvement. On the other hand, the wedge represents the documented system that ensures that standardised current best practice is used, until this definition of best practice is changed. However, the wheel and wedge model, though combining the two dominant models, does not go far enough in satisfying most of the broader concerns and challenges of the above list. What the wheel-and-wedge model argues for is a technical integration of models (Woodhouse as cited by Brennan, *et. al.,* 1997: 68-70).

Simply arguing that TQM is about participation, and that conformance to specifications is about documented standards, misses the point about each model. Most essentially, TQM is about the nature of change and the internal

and external relationships an organisation develops to determine and manage such change; it is a philosophical concept that embraces change and transformation. By contrast, conformance-to-specification models are about measuring defined and static procedures, the antithesis of the change point of view. Thus, to combine (at an operational level) a commitment to quality improvement and participation with a fully-fledged, documented and accountable system is an important step, but not in itself sufficient to be located within the TQM paradigm (Whitford and Bird, 1996: 8).

Ultimately, the new model that needs to emerge has to balance the challenges of accountability (internal and external), improvement, and participation, which are at the heart of the challenges confronting education and training institutions the world over. However, simply accommodating these "pillars" in a technical and procedural manner, as the wheel and wedge model does, is problematic. Rather, institutions need to locate their integrated and combined quality management strategy within a new paradigm of transformation and change.

3.5.4   ANALYSING TQM AND CONFORMANCE TO SPECIFICATIONS PERSPECTIVES

The discussion of the principles of TQM point to the need to managing institutions that are undergoing change as it is the case in the South African higher education scenario. Institutions of higher learning are being called upon to review their missions and purposes in line with the reconfiguration agenda. The period after 1997 has been characterised by many challenges such as the 'three- year rolling plans', 'size and shape', changing the funding formula, the establishment of the Higher Education Quality Committee, the publishing of the National Plan as well as the National Working Group recommendations on the future higher education landscape. All of these challenges point to the need for institutional governance structures to take the lead in managing the change described above.

In relation to the conformance to rules or specifications, institutions of higher learning have been faced with a myriad of pieces of legislation and policy documents from the Department of Education, fresh reporting procedures, and the need to be responsive to the needs of society. Governance structures, without exception, are expected to promote good practice regardless of their past historical deficiencies.

Another point made by the TQM perspective is that all members at all levels of an institution are responsible for quality assurance. In the context of the research question, governing councils, senates, students' representative bodies as well as the institutional forums are all supposed to be engaged in the management, maintenance, control, monitoring and enhancement of quality in their institutions. Collective involvement could lead to ownership of the strategic direction an institution is destined to pursue.

It is incumbent upon institutional governance structures to foster a climate that is conducive to the attainment of the goals set by the institution. The creation of the culture of participatory decision making is another structural challenge faced by uneven South African higher education institutions. The TQM model is open and progressive in the manner that institutional governance structures are expected to be transparent and progressive in their endeavour to influence quality assurance mechanisms. Although the conformance to specifications model is conservative in its approach, certain elements of it are necessary such as sticking to rules, allocated budgets and relying on records to mention a few. A case in point of the model is the conformance to the stipulations of the Higher Education Act of 1997 and its Amendments that appear to be on-going.

A pertinent question that could be posed in relation to the research question is: 'Do these contrasting perspectives on quality point to the need for different quality assurance structures and mechanisms?'

Although the legislation governing higher education is clear about the equality of institutions, there is a need for the system to recognise the inherent

differences in approaches at institutional levels. There are competing discourses on the notions of quality and institutional quality management. Ideally, institutions would like to follow the TQM perspective, so the question becomes, 'Is it practical to have this quality management perspective in all its dimensions?' The answer could be neither here nor there since institutions have their preferences. This issue is taken further in response to the questionnaire in Chapter 6. This analysis attests to the influence that is positive, but different from the HDI-HAI perspective.

The following section summarises the characteristics of quality assurance and management planning in higher education. The South African higher education system is no exception in that the work of the quality 'gurus' (cf. 3.6), the input of SAQA, and the TQM principles/concepts all concur that "quality is everybody's business" although there are structures held responsible for quality enhancement.

3.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Deming's 14 points	2. Juran's ten steps	3. Feigenbaum's ten Benchmarks	4. Crosby's 14 steps	5. Peter's 12 attributes	6. SAQA's 14 elements	7. Kells's nine propositions	8. TQM concepts, principles and characteristics
1.1 Create constancy of purpose to improve product and service	2.1 Build awareness of the need and the opportunity for improvement	3.1 Quality is a company-wide process	4.1 Make it clear that management is committed to quality	5.1 Management obsession with quality – practical action backed up by emotional commitment	6.1 It must be designed and targeted at learners and directed at improving their attainment of the necessary standards	Primary attributes 7.1 Purpose of the process (improvement, public assurance and rationalization)	Concepts 8.1 A clear customer focus to satisfy the needs and expectations of the customers and the chosen target group
1.2 Adopt new philosophy for new economic age by management learning responsibilities and taking leadership for change	2.2 Set goals for improvement	3.2 Quality is what the customer says it is	4.2 Form quality improvement teams with senior representatives from each department	5.2 Passionate systems – failure will occur if there is a system without passion or vice versa, and an ideology is important, though not one necessarily based on a particular guru	6.2 Directly improve the quality of an institution's teaching and learning strategies. This means equally emphasizing the outcome (output) of the educational experience as well as the process of attainment.	7.2 Source or initiator (individual or group of institutions, government)	8.2 TQM requires continuous improvement in everything an organisation does.

1.3 Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality; eliminate the need for mass inspection by building quality into the product.	**2.3** Organise to reach the goals (establish a quality council, identify problems, select projects, appoint teams, designate facilitators)	**3.3** Quality and cost are a sum, not a difference.	**4.3** Measure processes to determine where current and potential quality problems lie.	**5.3** Ensurement of quality – this should be a feature from the start, enacted by everybody and the result of it widely displayed.	**6.3** It must be flexible and be able to adapt to everchanging demands and circumstances. This means moving away from rigid structures, procedures and bureaucracies and designing more responsive, manageable and creative strategies which devolve quality management and quality assurance responsibilities to a variety of levels, particularly to practitioners.	**7.3** Framework for judgements (stated intentions, peer opinions, norms and comparisons)	**8.3** Quality assurance of internal processes (This implies that the standards are set, procedures to achieve them are defined, and adherence to these is guaranteed, problems occurring are remedied in a systematic way.)
1.4 End awarding business on price, instead minimize total cost and move towards single suppliers for items.	**2.4** Give recognition.	**3.4** Quality is an ethic	**4.4** Establish progress monitoring for the improvement process	**5.4** Small is beautiful – there is significance in every change and no such thing as a small	**6.4** It must give all stakeholders a role in and a sense of ownership over the quality management	**7.4** Focus or unit of analysis (entire institutions, institution-wide issues, services, academic	**8.4** Process orientation (the final quality of a product or service depends on all preceding processes)

				improvement.	process. This entails developing a participatory and inclusive management style and procedures as well as inculcating democratic and quality culture and practices.	programmes or departments [all aspects or teaching only] projects, people)	
1.5 Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service to improve quality and productivity and to decrease costs	**2.5** Communicate results	**3.5** Quality requires continuous improvement	**4.5** Train supervisors to actively carry out their part of the quality improvement programme	**5.5** Create endless 'Hawthorne" effects – new events are the antidote to the doldrums or flagging interest in quality	**6.5** It must directly and indirectly involve learners in the quality management process, creating a feedback loop and a working relationship between stakeholders at all levels and functions within the organisation	**7.5** Primary procedure(s) (self-evaluation process, external peer review process, indicators, ratings, published rankings)	**8.5** Prevention instead of inspection to achieve quality. Through adequate prevention measures (appropriate design, decent planning, targeted training, adequate equipment, effective communication, etc.) less quality errors will occur, customers will be more satisfied, and less inspections and control will be needed.

1.6 Institute training on the job	2.6 Keep score	3.6 Quality is the most cost-effective, least capital-intensive route to productivity.	4.6 Hold a zero defects day to let everyone realize that there has been a change and to reaffirm management commitment.	5.6 Parallel organisational structure devoted to quality improvement – this describes the creation of shadow quality teams and emphasizes that it is a route through which hourly paid workers can progress.	6.6 It must develop a system of measurement which proves progress and not simply outcomes or procedures.	International propositions 7.6 There is a fairly strong relationship between the national cultural attributes (power distance; uncertainly avoidance; masculinity/femininity; individualism/collectivism) of a country and the type of national evaluation system one can and should build there.	Operational principles 8.6 Management leadership and commitment. The driving force behind any TQM approach must be the commitment, vision and exemplary leadership of the senior management, which should be carried down to every level of management within the organisation.
1.7 Institute leadership; supervision should be to help to do a better job; overhaul supervision of management and production workers.	2.7 Provide training	3.7 Quality requires both individual and team zealots	4.7 Evaluate the cost of quality and explain its use as a management tool.	5.7 Quality is rewarded – recognizing quality achievement with tangible rewards provides the incentive to bring about breakthroughs in attitude.	6.7 It must create collaborative partnerships, both internal and external to the provider and the organisation.	7.7 National circumstances (size; complexity; diversity and the like)	8.7 TQM requires teamwork and effective TQM strategies.

1.8 Drive out fear so that all may work effectively for the organisation.	**2.8** Carry out projects to solve problems.	**3.8** Quality is a way of managing.	**4.8** Raise the quality awareness and personal concern of all employees.	**5.8** Everyone is trained for quality – extensive training should apply to all in the company, and this should encompass construction in cause and effect analysis, statistical process control, and group interaction.	**6.8** It must organise the diversity of delivery and teaching methods within institutions and providers. This entails creating quality systems which integrate standards and monitor and ensure equivalencies.	**7.8** The relative influence of national circumstances and the national cultural attributes are probably as follows: the circumstances affect the initial statement of purposes, the unit of analysis, the size of the evaluation scheme, the relationship to matters of national reform and whether a phased development of the system is needed.	**8.8** Quality is everyones job (involvement of all employees at all levels and in all departments).
1.9 Break down barriers between departments; research, design, sales and production must work together to foresee problems in production and use.	**2.9** Report progress.	**3.9** Quality and innovation are mutually dependent.	**4.9** Take actions to correct problems identified through previous steps.	**5.9** Multifunction teams – teams which span the traditional organisational structures should be introduced; quality circles or, to be more recommended,	**6.9** It must have an explicit purpose which is both negotiated and agreed upon by stakeholders as well as being public and transparent.	**7.9** The wider the range of apparent quality and the diversity in the higher education system, the more there is a profound need for a national regulation system.	**8.9** Focus on facts. Discussions and decisions on activities and resources allocations should be based on reliable and relevant information.

				cross-functional teams such as error cause removal or corrective action teams.			
1.10 Eliminate slogans, exhortations, and numerical targets for the workforce, such as zero defects or new productivity levels. Such exhortations are divisive, as the bulk of the problems belong to the system and are beyond the power of the workforce.	**2.10** Maintain momentum by making annual improvement part of the regular systems and processes of the company.	**3.10** Quality is implemented with a total system connected with customers and suppliers.	**4.10** Encourage individuals to establish improvement goals for themselves and their groups.	**5.10** Everyone is involved – the quality process is comprehensive, embracing suppliers, distributors and customers.	**6.10** It must have internal capacity to follow up and improve on assessment and quality assurance results.	**7.10** The larger the set of basic, systematic problems in a country or in a given institution, the more important it is to implement countrywide or institution-wide reforms in these areas (often, support levels; credentialed staff and other human resource issues; capital and other related investments) before, or at least during, the development of a national evaluation scheme.	**8.10** TQM is based on systematic problem-solving.

1.11 Eliminate quotas or work standards, and management by objectives or numerical goals; substitute leadership.			**4.11** Encourage individuals to communicate to management the obstacles they face in attaining their improvement goals.	**5.11** When quality goes up, costs go down – quality improvement is the primary source of cost reduction. The elementary force at work is simplification of design, process or procedures.	**6.11** It must allow for self-assessment, peer review and an external meta-evaluation capacity.	**7.11** The lower the level of the culture of evaluation in a national system or in an institution, the more important it is to operate with an "experimental" learn-by-doing and protected period, before attempting to implement some evaluation scheme across the system.	<u>Implementation characteristics</u> **8.11** The formulation of a clear vision and mission statement.
1.12 Remove barriers that rob people of their right to pride or workmanship; hourly workers, management and engineering; eliminate annual or merit ratings and management by objective.			**4.12** Recognise and appreciate those who participate.	**5.12** Quality improvement is a never-ending journey – all quality is relative, it does not stand still.	**6.12** It must be regular and cyclical. Quality management is not an event, but linked to ongoing processes which seek enhancement and improvement.	**7.12** In most settings it is important to have the national system encourage institutions to move marginal resources to pay for the evaluation scheme and the recommended improvements.	**8.12** The establishment of a quality manual, which describes the organisation, its policy, its key processes and the responsibility and authority of the straff.

1.13 Institute a vigorous education and self-improvement programme.		**4.13** Establish quality councils to communicate on a regular basis.	**6.13** It must result in a formal and documented analysis which is translated into a clear plan of action for which the institution is accountable.	**7.13** In most countries, although it is certainly more possible in some than in others (due to cultural factors), in the long run, the heart of the evaluation culture and the evaluation systems must be owned by, designed by and conducted by institutions and they must be internal to the institutions.	**8.13** Systemic training of staff throughout the system.
1.14 Put everyone in the company to work to accomplish the transformation		**4.14** Do it all over again to emphasise that the quality improvement programme never ends.	**6.14** It must involve both horizontal and vertical audits, participation and accountability.	**7.14** Cultural influences or evaluation processes may also be started in such propositional format.	**8.14** Decision-making is delegated to the lowest possible level.
					8.15 Customers are asked for feedback.

(Kells, 1995:18-25; Kells, 1999:209-232; Liston, 1999:11-16; SAQA, 2000:10-11; Van den Berghe, 1996:10-13 and Strydom & Van der Westhuizen, 2001:86-91).

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined in detail the origin of the quality movement essentially from the 1940s. A number of intellectuals, commonly known as the quality 'gurus' provided some insights aimed at enriching our understanding of the dynamics of the quality movement and how it impacts on higher education governance transformation and quality. Additionally, it provides a perspective of how, from the structural transformation and reconfiguration of the higher education system in this country, we can be able to utilise the best practice principles and further improve on them in our context.

What stands out in this chapter is that quality is a relative concept, sometimes referred to as elusive. It is also something that needs to be improved continuously. It is a phenomenon that needs to be shared across the institution or organisation [by stakeholders] for the benefit of the institution. It has also been useful to examine the issue of standards in conjunction with quality because these notions are not mutually exclusive regardless of whether it is in the academia or service industry.

The principles underpinning the Total Quality Management or Continuous Quality Improvement summed up the theme in relation to the elements identified by SAQA in pursuit of acceptable quality management systems for providers of education in this country. This connection brings about the perspective of the research question in that governance structures have to tap on the quality principles available and apply them in their institutional setting for purposes of quality enhancement.

The next chapter will compare the higher education models of selected countries (notably New Zealand, Australia the United Kingdom, and to a limited extent case studies from the United States of America) and zoom in on the implications of

international comparisons in South Africa.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO QUALITY AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOCUS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance and quality promotion as described in the previous chapters, appear to be an international phenomenon that is firmly placed on the agenda for higher education.   The South African higher education system is a relative late comer in the quality debates, and yet institutions of higher learning, and in some instances accreditation bodies have, for a considerable period of time been wary of quality assurance imperatives (Smith, Armstrong & Brown, 1999: 9). Internationally, there have been commendable strides made in some countries to promote the culture of quality in higher learning, largely based on the principles derived from other sectors.   Much has been documented in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States of America, New Zealand, Australia and several other European countries (Appelby, 1999: 53).

❑   The purpose of this chapter is to briefly draw some of the QA experiences internationally, at both the system and institutional (case studies) levels.

❑   Then focus on the situation in this country in areas of institutional quality assurance profiles in the university sector, and the existing practices in the technikon sector, particularly in over the last decade or so.

❑   Demonstrate how institutional governance can benefit from lessons learned in other parts of the world in order to enhance the development of a QA system in South Africa.

Emphasis will be placed on the roles of governing structures in relation to quality assurance. The dominating structure in these international case studies is the senate, as a result of the academic focus on QA. The two pillars of quality assurance, namely accountability and improvement will be matched with the authority structures to determine the impact that they are or will be making on transformation currently, and in the future. Councils for example, are finally accountable for the effective governance and fiduciary duties in institutions of higher learning. Whereas senates are accountable to councils, much of the core business of senate is academic in nature, and thus focuses more on improvement dimensions in teaching and learning, research and community service. This chapter explores perspectives on programme assessment and accreditation, total quality, peer review approaches in so far as they relate to curriculum re-engineering, and also the external quality monitoring or audits.

Highlights on institutional approaches will assist to map up the direction that the higher education system in this country is attempting to follow. In the spirit of the TQM principles, the role of students in an endeavour to promote a culture of quality will also inform the ongoing debates about student assessment and new learning techniques that are aimed at transforming the student. This transformation paradigm is applicable in the structural arrangements as they relate to quality.

4.2   THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON QUALITY

Higher education increasingly operates as an enterprise without national borders, and networking and globalisation have become commonplace in this sector (Scott, 2000: 3). The increasing mobility of students, professionals, and other work seekers across national and continental boundaries combined with the increase in distance and on-line provision underscores the need for global debate about the comparability and equivalence of educational provision and outcomes

(Khan, 2000; 11). The increasing internationalisation of higher education and the 'globalisation of labour markets' makes collaboration among national and regional quality assurance agencies even more critical in the 21st century (Singh, 2000: 8). Undoubtedly, quality has been the central concept and major focus of the policies of institutions and governments in the field of higher education in the nineties.

The Australian Minister of Employment, Education and Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) stressed the importance of international considerations in the implementation of a quality assurance system in December of 1999 in the following manner:

> *There are several facets to the link between globalisation and quality assurance. Education is now one of Australia's major export industries in an intensely competitive market. While Australian universities compete with each other in this market, they also compete with the rest of the world. Our major competitors have external quality assurance mechanisms, and countries in our largest markets look to government verification of quality standards. To maintain market position we need to be able to advertise that we have quality assurance mechanisms in place, that they are being applied, and that they are having a positive effect on outcomes* (Kemp, 1999: 3).

With varying intensity, pace, thoroughness and success, according to Van Damme (2000: 10), most countries in the world have established systems and procedures of quality assurance in higher education, comparable to those in industry created a number of years ago. Now, at the end of the nineties, traditional, informal academic self-regulation -- which for centuries was held to be sufficient in guaranteeing quality -- has been replaced by explicit quality assurance mechanisms and related reporting and external accountability procedures.

While transnational education offers benefits, it raises vexing questions, according to McBurnie (2000: 25). Even where a provider is recognised as *bona fide* by its home country, how can one be confident that quality is maintained when the programmmes "cross the border" into another nation. Other questions may be asked about the appropriateness of foreign content and teaching methods. Quality issues in transnational education must be seen in the broader context of quality in higher education.

A widely used definition of quality is "fitness for purpose," with quality assurance defined as "those systems, procedures, processes, and actions intended to lead to the achievement, maintenance, monitoring, and enhancement of quality" (Woodhouse, 1998: 258; Sallis, 1997: 15-16).

4.3 GLOBAL QUALITY ASSURANCE BODIES

Quality assurance has indeed become a worldwide phenomenon. The need for sharing information and interaction among national / regional quality assurance agencies has led to the formation of the international networks such as the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), amongst others. For purposes of clarification of global and international networks these organisations are identified to be relevant, current and effective in the dissemination of elements of good practice in higher education. It is from these international best practices that higher education in this country benefit as indicated by the entrepreneurial-expanding and traditional-elite institutions (see Chapter 7 section 7.2.3).

4.3.1 INQAAHE

An opening message from the former President of INQAAHE, Jacques L'Ecuyer at the conference held in May 1997 at the Kruger National Park, in South Africa was that

> " new developments are also regularly occurring in the field of quality assurance. The globalisation of the economy and the availability of powerful means of communication have given rise to new preoccupations for the internationalisation of standards in postsecondary education. The dissemination of Deming's idea in the industrial world has led to the establishment of the ISO 9000 norms. The generalisation of these norms to all kinds of enterprises is likely to influence our methods of assuring quality" (INQAAHE, 1997).

INQAAHE has a membership of quality assurance bodies in higher education in approximately 50 countries, with international conferences held biennially.

4.3.1.1   THE PURPOSE OF INQAAHE

The primary purpose of the Network is to enable members to share information about the maintenance, evaluation and improvement of higher education, and to disseminate good practices in the field of quality assurance. In addition, the QA Network enables members to:

- establish links between quality assurance and accreditation bodies worldwide;
- obtain information about higher education systems of different countries;
- be better informed about qualifications and awards for the purpose of credit transfer;
- conduct research in higher education quality management; and
- evaluate and monitor developments in higher education

To achieve these purposes, the network organises biennial conferences and other activities, publishes a newsletter called 'QA' and distributes to its members the journal 'Quality in Higher Education' (INQAAHE 5th Biennial Conference, May 1999: 71).

4.3.2 GATE

The Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) is a non-profit alliance, based in Washington, D.C., and founded to address issues of quality assurance for educational programmes and services which cross national borders. GATE was inaugurated at a 1996 conference in London, England, with participants from multinational corporations, national associations, the professions, accrediting and licensing authorities, and institutions of higher education worldwide. It was at this conference that it was announced that its secretariat would become the responsibility of The Centre for Quality Assurance in International Education with immediate effect.

GATE's programmes are designed to meet the needs of each of the constituencies mentioned above by:

- exploring current issues corporations face in international hiring and universities face in international admissions;
- providing access to global information on educational systems and institutions, and transnational educational offerings; and
- developing principles of good practice and recognition of quality in international education and training.

The strategic partnership that is GATE exists to maximize information and assure the quality of transnational educational programmes in a rapidly globalising education and human resources market (CQAHE, 1997: 6).

4.4 QUALITY PERSPECTIVES FROM AUSTRALIA

The last decade has seen a growing concern about quality assurance in the Australian higher education system. The so-called 'quality movement' - with its theoretical models and specialised discourse - has impinged on the mainstream consciousness only since the issuing of a brief by the Commonwealth Government Minister to the Higher Education Council (HEC) in 1991, for an investigation of issues relating to quality in higher education and recommendations for the policy initiatives.

According to Baldwin, in Brennan *et. al* (1997: 276) there is no doubt that the developments in European countries, especially in Great Britain, had a strong influence on Australian policy trends in this area. For over two decades it has been a problem in some circles in Australia to encourage the transference of overseas ideas, and often the uncritical acceptance of overseas prescriptions without adequately recognising the differences between conditions in Australia and other comparable countries (Sheldrake and Linke, 1979: 13).

In an attempt to address the concerns expressed by many that the recent expansion of the system since the 1988 White Paper, the Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services, Peter Baldwin was instrumental in coining the following terms of reference for the Higher Education Council:

□ to examine the characteristics of quality and its diversity in higher education;
□ to examine the strategies that may be developed by government and the higher education system to encourage, maintain and improve the quality of higher education;
□ to examine the relative importance of factors affecting quality, including student mix, teaching and research, in furthering the quality of higher education;
□ to examine the nature of the relationship between resources and the quality of higher education; and

❏ also the means by which changes in quality over time may be monitored and evaluated, and to report, through the National Board, with recommendations for future policy initiatives (Higher Education: The Challenges Ahead, 1990: 30, sec. 4.10).

It is quite notable that the quality assurance movement of the past decade in Australian higher education has sprung from a variety of factors. Particularly important have been community and government concerns about academic standards and the levels of achievement of graduates in a time of major expansion in student numbers associated with decreased government funding support per student unit.

Clearly, the effects of increased international competitiveness have also driven it, by recognition of the need for greater mobility of professional labour. Demands for greater accountability by public institutions, by concerns related to the expansion of the private higher education sector, and by pressure from employers and the professions for university courses to become more relevant to workplace needs (Harman, 1998; 331). This phenomenon seems to have manifested itself in most countries that embarked on the task of developing quality systems in higher education.

4.4.1 THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY

In the Commonwealth of Australia, the six states have constitutional responsibility for higher education; universities are established and operate under state legislation. However, the Commonwealth government has taken over funding responsibilities, and therefore controls planning. Higher education is almost entirely a public system, although there is a small number of private institutions that have been established in recent years. In 1989, the government introduced a 'user-pays' element into the funding of higher education (known as the Higher Education Contribution Scheme), where students are expected to pay

approximately one-quarter of the average cost of their education, but can defer repayment until they are earning above a designated threshold, and repay through instalments as part of the taxation system (Brennan, *et al.*,1997: 277).

The 1950s saw the start of a remarkable transformation of Australian higher education, a shift from an elite to a mass system that has much in common with similar movements in other countries, but is arguably the most rapid and far-reaching of all. The expansion of the university system came in several stages. The first saw the establishment of two new large institutions (the University of New South Wales and Monash) which developed along lines very similar to those of the traditional universities and which were quickly able to compete with them for students and establish strong research records. A second wave produced universities with different profiles and approaches: they did not offer the full range of professional courses, they experimented with inter-disciplinary studies and catered for somewhat different groups of people - students from less privileged backgrounds and mature students returning to study (Brennan, *et al.*, 1997: 278). At the same time, the technical and teachers' colleges were growing and the former institutions were expanding their range of offerings.

Looking back a little, the Commonwealth government in 1965, acting on the principal recommendations of a committee it had set up to investigate the future of tertiary education in Australia, known as the Martin Committee, established a binary system, with a university sector and an advanced education sector. The latter was to be different from, but complementary to, the university system, with a stronger vocational emphasis, and was to cost significantly less. A major part of the cost difference was that these colleges were not to be funded for research. A strong theme in the discussions surrounding this inquiry and the government's response was the desire to protect the nature and quality of university education in the expansion that was obviously necessary (Davies, 1989 cited by Baldwin in Brennan, et al., 1997: 279).

Another wave of change in higher education came as a result of 'the Dawkins revolution', which called for the re-conceptualisation of higher education and its place in society. This 1988 famous White Paper was an attempt to re-position higher education as an essential part of the economy of the country. Government departments were thus reorganised and re-named, the binary divide was abolished, and institutions were amalgamated and funding policies were adapted to the new Unified National System.

An official policy of the Commonwealth government is to allow and encourage the autonomy of individual universities. This is demonstrated by a "hands-off" approach to academic matters. The notion of 'quality audit' seemed to offer the government a way of directing institutions to pay more attention to their own procedures for ensuring and demonstrating quality, while respecting institutional autonomy. Quality assurance measures are, of necessity, not prescribed by the Commonwealth government; but it would ask that institutions should demonstrate that they had a systematic and coherent system for evaluation and improvement. This was the genesis of the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CQAHE).

4.4.2 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS

The establishment of the CQAHE as was outlined in the report by Professor Ian Chubb entitled "Higher Education: Achieving Quality" was founded on the following terms of reference:

❑ Invite universities to participate in a regular review and audit of their mechanisms for monitoring and improving the quality of their outcomes:

~ examine portfolios volunteered by universities showing what they have put in place to assure and improve quality;

~ evaluate how they have assessed the effects of their policies and processes, including summaries of their own assessments of their performance;

~ conduct interviews and visits as appropriate; and

~ use existing, nationally based data.

❑ Recommend directly to the Minister(s) on the allocation of the specially designated funds to universities to recognise achievements demonstrated by the effectiveness of policies and procedures through an evaluation of their assessment of their quality of their outcomes.

❑ Advise the Minister on the use of the National Priority (Reserve) Fund earmarked for the development of quality assurance mechanisms and processes and related innovations, and on the funding allocations recommended as a result of the work of the committee for the Advancement of University Teaching.

❑ Over time, monitor the benefits resulting from funding previously allocated.

❑ Disseminate information on the best national and international practices and advise universities seeking assistance with quality assurance programmes.

❑ Assess from time to time, the range of quality assurance mechanisms used by universities and to provide advice on the effect of those mechanisms, and any alternatives.

❑ Provide advice to universities on matters which should be addressed at institutional levels.

❑ Advise the Minister(s) on issues relating specifically to the quality assurance mechanisms and processes (HEC, 1992a: 80).

The whole idea of explicitly managing for quality was somewhat foreign to the culture of Australian higher education at the time, therefore, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) commissioned a major study by Dr David Warren Piper of the University of Queensland, on quality issues in higher education. He advanced a comprehensive or almost encyclopaedic model of quality planning and management in the university sector. Warren Piper defined quality as a 'domain that could be mapped' and identified eight provinces or areas which need to be managed in universities, namely, educational programmes, research, community service, staff, students, academic support

services, resources and assets and the overall governance of the institution (Warren Piper, 1993: vol. 1:21).

With regard to how quality is to be assured in each of these areas, Piper (1993: vol.1.33) identified the criteria by which the adequacy of an institution's quality mechanisms might be judged. These criteria commonly known as the Seven Seas ("Cs"), are Comprehensiveness; Communication; Cogency; Coherence; Consonance; Constancy; and Consequence. These two domains provided an overarching model of quality in universities. It was of interest to those at the institutional level involved in managing for quality and assuring quality and, at the system-wide level, those involved in auditing the adequacy of institutional quality assurance (Candy and Maconachie, 1997: 360). Over the years the system was refined, but the approach remained basically the same.

4.4.3   THE CASE OF MONASH UNIVERSITY

Monash is Australia's largest university, with more than 40, 000 students enrolled at 6 Australian campuses, 1, 000 at its Malaysian campus, and some 3, 000 students in a range of partnered transnational operations in Asia. The university had already recognised the need for more systematic development of its own procedures before the first quality audit in 1993. Attention was given to the development of quality assurance mechanisms that would ensure reasonable consistency across the university in its academic operations, workload, student representation, and review of outcomes. The policy also covers many aspects of course presentation, evaluation and continuous improvement.

An internal review of the management of research in the university in 1992 resulted in a strong affirmation of the principle of 'parity of esteem' for all areas of research and the right of all academics to conduct interest-driven research. Central administration, however, is actively involved in monitoring performance in this area.   The Research Services Division has done a lot of research on

performance indicators, has introduced streamlined processes for gathering information and has engaged in systematic checking of returns for accuracy, the appropriateness of the claims, etc. (Brennan, et al., 1997: 289). Other methods include benchmarking, the use of performance indicators, and theme-specific review processes such as the OECD Internationalisation Quality Review Process (IQRP), which the institutions can use to review and "enhance the quality of their international dimension according to their own stated aims and objectives" (Knight and de Wit, eds., 1999: 241). The IQRP, like the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE), utilises the internationally accepted approach of self-evaluation checked by external peer review, and Monash has undergone both processes (McBurnie, 2000: 26).

The transformation of institutional cultures is deeper than the quality assurance movement, and in the case of Monash there has been some clear benefits, although numerous problems were identified with the interpretation of outcomes in Australia. Monash's success story include:

❑ a stronger culture of self-evaluation on the basis of evidence

❑ the articulation of many things formerly taken for granted -- policies, values, educational principles, etc. -- which has stirred debate and encouraged reflection

❑ a re-examination of fundamental questions about the nature of university education

❑ creativity in curriculum development, in response to concern for the interests and needs of stakeholders

❑ more sustained attention to the presentation of mission and achievements to the tax-paying public

❑ a more systematic approach to many aspects of university operations, such as course approval, management training, consultation with students

❑ better communication between faculties and departments and between these units and central administration

□ a shift towards a more student-centred approach in teaching (Brennan, et al., 1997: 296).

4.4.3.1 THE CURRENT STRATEGIC FOCI

A fresh mandate of the HEC in Australia is to guide the development of the system, ensure it is appropriately rigorous and report publicly on institutional- and system-wide quality assurance outcomes. It also has to provide an accountability structure for the sector that is credible to government, the community, and the universities themselves (Candy and Maconachie, 1997: 366). The process of implementing a new QA strategy has placed enormous responsibilities on institutions of higher learning. For example, the decision to participate in the review squarely resided with each institution in the unified national system. The process has been based on initial self-assessment and institutions themselves have determined what evidence to present in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of their relevant policies and practices, and the quality of their outcomes (Alt, 1999: 76). The new approach is being driven by ongoing accountability concerns.

The government's policy to encounter greater competition within the higher education sector and increased revenue-generating activities by institutions is creating new concerns that financial considerations may drive institutions to sacrifice academic standards. Hence, the present government sees quality assurance as a means to protecting other key planks in its overall policy approach for higher education (Harman, 1998: 345).

According to the Minister of Higher Education of the New Coalition Government, the previous programme was fundamentally flawed and unsustainable over the longer term. It relied on separate funds to ensure institutional involvement in a process that was externally imposed, and which assumed that all universities

could be ranked against a common set of criteria (Higher Education Budget Statement, 1996: 13).

The momentum for an integrated response to diversity has accelerated considerably in only the last two or three years, partly in the wake of a national quality assurance process and partly as a consequence of the emergence of new stakeholders, alongside students and academics (McInnis 1998:38). The ways in which universities respond to the new realities of student populations at a strategic planning level will be as diverse as the populations they aim to serve. The increasing numbers of students demanding academic support imply major adjustments of university programmes and services. Integrated strategic planning is essential if universities are to maintain control over the shape and quality of their academic programmes (McInnis 1998:38).

In conclusion, evaluation and reviews are not just technical mechanisms for accountability and improvement but can be used, and are used by different political actors associated with higher education as important policy instruments. In some cases, professionals may have some empathy for the policy objective sought, while in others, they may be highly critical. But whatever objectives, there needs to be consciousness of political agendas and motives in any programme of evaluation and reviews, particularly at the national or higher education system level. Of the range of policy instruments available, quality assurance reviews can be particularly powerful policy levers in the hands of ministers and bureaucrats (Harman, 1998: 345).

4.5 QUALITY PERSPECTIVES FROM NEW ZEALAND:
The State Sector reforms

New Zealand has a population of 3.5 million, and its higher education sector comprises seven universities, 25 polytechnics, four colleges of education, and two *wananga* (Maori language institutions), in addition to a few small, special-purpose private institutions. It is difficult to separate the effects on higher education of external quality assurance processes and agencies from the effects of the other radical, structural changes in New Zealand society over the last decade. During this period, a transition from élite to mass higher education has been taking place in a context of major social and economic change. These include: financial market deregulation with increased reporting of financial performance; public sector reform, with a distinction between outcomes and outputs and a heavy reliance on contractual responsibilities; self-management by individual entities within a strengthened reporting and accountability regime; a focus on output-based funding; greater targeting of expenditure; more contestability in supply; and greater distinction between the ownership and purchase roles of the Government; all designed to increase the efficiency and accountability of public sector managers (Preddy 1993, Trotman 1996 in Woodhouse and Hall, 1997: 377). The changes have led to a great increase in the need for and use of monitoring and evaluation, to see if targets are being met, contracts are being kept, and accountability is being achieved. These changes affect the higher education institutions directly, as well as affecting the environment within which they operate, including changed attitudes and expectations (Woodhouse 1994, 1997: 377- 378).

Although the restructuring in higher education has not been as extensive as in other areas, the general principles underlying the higher education reforms have mirrored those in the rest of the state sector. Reform in the higher education sector has included the introduction of fees; deregulation of tuition fees; and the

income contingent student loan scheme. Under consideration are changes in governance and a capital-charging regime for higher education institutions.

Significant among the reforms, is the evolving roles of councils of higher education institutions. At present, these have representatives from business, industry, local authorities, universities, women's and ethnic groups, as well as wider education and community interests. The government is considering legislation to reduce the size of councils to four or five members, nominated by the Minister of Education from the business sector. The proposed capital charging regime for higher education institutions would require them to recognise the cost of capital invested in them by the government, and is intended to encourage them to use their capital resources (more) efficiently (Blackmore 1995 as cited by Woodhouse and Hall, 1997: 378).

4.5.1 *VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON (VUW) CASE STUDY*

A number of well-established quality assurance and quality control provisions were in place before any academic audit: "VUW's preparation for external academic audit has been long, detailed, thorough and productive" (New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit 1999: 1 of 3). Between the late 1980s and early 1990s consciousness was growing of the need for the university to reshape some aspects of its operations.

The VUW had for some years examined its academic quality assurance procedures and in 1994 an overseas academic commissioned an external audit. In 1995 it documented all of its quality-related processes in a quality assurance manual. This demonstrates an extensive self-review which resulted in a written audit portfolio which provided the basic information for the audit's panel's investigations (New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit 1999: 1 of 3).

In its strategic plan for 1995-1999, the university acknowledged the need for a framework for regular assessment of its progress in reaching the goals of the strategic plan.

It identified the need to establish more specific objectives, which allowed the university to assess its progress. The university replaced its strategic plan with a more detailed operational plan process under the heading of *Mission and Goals 1996-2000*. The significance of the operational planning procedures of the university for academic audit is that they establish the framework within which the various quality assurance provisions can be integrated at the micro-level and linked with the macro-goals of the University (Hall, Woodhouse & Jermyn 1997: 434).

4.5.2 CURRENT QA STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

The New Zealand universities decided to adopt the process of academic audit as the mechanism for monitoring institutional quality assurance following upon a series of inter-university workshops and seminars held by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) in 1992. The purpose of these meetings were:

□ To examine overseas and New Zealand trends and pressures for quality monitoring;

□ To identify the range of current monitoring practices in New Zealand universities;

□ To determine whether a national approach to quality monitoring was necessary and, if so, what form this approach should take.

The outcome of these 1992 NZVCC meetings was the decision to create a New Zealand Universities' Academic Audit (AAU) with similar, but not identical functions to that of the UK Unit. Following a period of consultation throughout the universities, the AAU was established as an independent unit.

A manual on academic audit was produced by the AAU which provided a comprehensive coverage of the audit process, including details of the portfolio that institutions should develop, the self-review they should undertake, the focus of the audit, details of the visit, and the mechanisms for reporting. Under the heading "*Initiating the process*", the Manual described the relationship of the audit process to the roles of the AAU and the self-evaluation undertaken by the institution.

Self-evaluation processes inevitably took three forms:
The first involved periodic review processes which universities undertook of their systems, irrespective of their involvement with the academic audit.

The second involved trail audits, either by an auditor from the United Kingdom or from the AAU itself.

The third involved preparation of the audit portfolio and dealt with the actual self-evaluation statement submitted to the AAU. For instance, the University of Auckland (UA) was audited during the period April to November 1997 (University of Auckland 1998: 1; Hall, Woodhouse & Jermyn 1997: 425).

The next cycle of audits, which has commenced in 1999, will comprise three theme audits followed by a comprehensive institutional audit.

Aspects of the NZQA accreditation and approval process were challenged. Insufficient attention was paid to the "professional artistry of the teaching practitioner". The transformative purpose of higher education also needs to be considered. All of this implies the need for a reconsideration of the focus of academic audit and perhaps the need to give greater emphasis to student experience (Hall, Woodhouse & Jermyn 1997: 425).

The focus and scope of the academic audit require some thoughtful reflection. The question is whether such a comprehensive process is required a second time. Should a more selective approach with greater focus on systems directly related to the quality of the teaching-learning environment not be undertaken?

It seems that there is a need for a reconsideration of the focus of academic audit and perhaps also the need for greater emphasis on the student experience. At Victoria University a relational model of teaching and learning has been developed. The focus of this research is to determine whether quality monitoring is impacting on the student experience.

4.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE PERSPECTIVES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In comparison to Australia, New Zealand or even The United Kingdom, the United States is not only the most populace nation, but has over 4, 000 colleges and universities ranging from small to large, private and public, and invariably the largest exporter of higher education in the world (Lenn, 1996: 4). In a series of discussions with academic staff at several universities in Minsk, Moscow and Kyiv regarding approaches to quality assurance in higher education, Stetar (2000: 32) was struck by the intensity of their characterisation of the USA as the "capital of educational arrogance". It is their assertion that far too many USA academics tend to view universities in most parts of the world from a perspective most akin to that of zealous missionaries from imperial Spain or Britain at the height of their respective empires. That is, there is no limit to the good that can be accomplished if only the "heathens" can be converted to the USA process of quality assurance.

It stands to reason that a country the size of the USA faces enormous challenges in its higher education. A narrow selection of the trends in higher education

quality debates will be helpful in order to contextualise the US perspectives on quality assurance. Given the culture of higher education in the United States, the debate over quality assurance stems from several seeming deep-rooted concerns which, in one view may be characterised as follows:

- ❑ Discontent with Higher Education bureaucracies;
- ❑ Rising costs that threaten public access;
- ❑ Higher Education is viewed as inherently inefficient;
- ❑ Unwilling to adopt even rudimentary processes to streamline costs;
- ❑ Curriculum and teaching methods are perceived as ineffective if not irrelevant (Stetar, 1996: 304).

There is, for example, a general and rising discontent in the United States with the educational bureaucracies and specific efforts have been undertaken to dismantle them and substantially reduce if not eliminate the number of government and higher education association *apparatchiki* that have emerged in recent years to regulate, guide and ensure quality in American Higher Education (Bergmann 1991: 12-16). Public opinion suggests a growing influence of government bureaucrats and university administrators coupled with a self-serving professoriate that are fuelling the rapid rise in the cost of higher education. This thinking resonates well with the increasingly financially strapped American middle and upper middle classes (Laing, 1995: 25- 29).

State and federal governments are also rethinking the current quality assurance process and their current stress upon institutional inputs. They are also looking at both institutional and programmatic accreditation and seem intent upon using the quality assurance process to make higher education more market oriented and thereby more responsive to state, regional and national needs. Such movement is consistent with the data emerging from the Higher Education Roundtables sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trust. According to Pew, the lesson of the early 1990s is that *"...most Americans were prepared to trust markets than government."* At every level, the willingness of society to tax itself

to promote the public good has receded, and most Americans have come to doubt the capacity of government to either clearly define appropriate public objectives or muster the expertise to effectively manage the programmes that will achieve them (Zemsky 1995: 1).

The private, voluntary accreditation process is also under attack as being too self-serving, intrusive and bureaucratic. Critics see the United States institutional accreditation process as ineffective and meddling in university affairs beyond any reasonable mandate. Specialised accreditation (e.g. business, law, education, medicine, etc.) dominated by professionals in the practice or discipline is seen as too concerned with salaries, buildings, faculty perquisites, etc. to effectively make a substantial contribution to the quality assurance process (Stetar, 1996: 306).

The steady rise in the number of accreditation and quality assurance bodies in the United States has forced many critics to ask if the proliferation will ever end. Likewise, one has to ask if there is any end to the willingness of these bodies to interfere in internal university budgetary processes. The best institutional budget plans are often quickly discarded as wave after wave of departments and disciplinary subsections come forth with demands for additional funding, library or computing resources, salaries or other expenditures to meet new professional or programme standards. These resources have to be drawn, in all but a few instances, from other departments who often lack the club of professional quality assurance (Trachtenberg and Wise 1996 as cited by Stetar, 1996: 306).

The future holds many important answers to the questions on how the US system of accreditation will evolve to insure quality not only in its higher education institutions and programmes, but how effectively it will incorporate global concerns for quality professional education. However, accreditation's rich history of peer review and collegiality in the US has armed it with the tools it needs to undertake self-examination and make the necessary changes (Lenn & Bobby, 1999: 268).

4.6.1 TOWARDS A MORE COMPETITIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

In recent years the quality, relevance, and cost of higher education has come under increasing scrutiny and criticism. Engelkemeyer, in Roberts (1995: 135) believes that higher education must follow the example of U.S. industry in improving competitiveness by increased responsiveness to customer needs. This means better meeting the needs of today's students and the organisations they will be working for tomorrow. Experimentation, creativity, and change will be required; there are few models to follow.

Many colleges and universities will choose to do nothing. They will continue to struggle with declining enrolments, student dissatisfaction, disenfranchised alumni, and public criticism. In Engelkemeyer's (1995: 135) opinion, well-known institutions of higher education – sleeping giants that have never had to worry about competition in the past – will diminish in prestige due to lethargy. New leadership institutions will emerge. Some of these new leaders may not even be in the business of higher education at this time. According to Roberts (1995: 138), society as a whole becomes the customer in Figure 4.1 below:
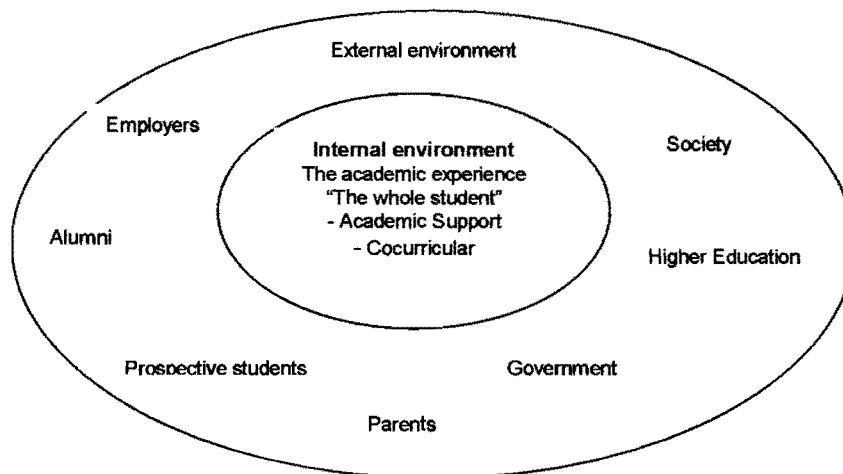
Figure 4.1. Who is the customer of higher education

4.6.2 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR TOTAL QUALITY AT BABSON COLLEGE:

A case study (presented by Dr Engelkemeyer, Director of Quality)

Babson College is a small private college based in Wellesley, Massachusetts, that has embarked on a successful journey towards total quality or continuous improvement from the early 1990s. According to Engelkemeyer (1995: 140 - 141) professional service providers (like health care and higher education) must develop more effective strategies to engage the professionals – doctors and academics -- in the adoption and implementation of total quality. The classic implementation strategy in industry is a top-down approach. With this strategy there is typically a full-scale, organisation-wide total quality launch. Training is conducted, teams are launched, and all employees are expected to be involved within a relatively short period of time.

In higher education, however, a top-down strategy is difficult to implement because there are few mechanisms to compel academics to become involved. Instead a strategy must be devised to effectively engage and involve faculty in the initiative. A strategy that allows interest and enthusiasm to bubble-up from the academia is needed to support, or even to make possible, a top-down approach applied to other areas of the college.

The strategy used at Babson has been a combination top-down and bubble-up approach. A deliberate effort was made to implement a differentiated strategy across the campus. With administrative and staff personnel, quality training was required. Involvement in continuous improvement initiatives eventually became part of all performance evaluations; however, academics were approached more cautiously, by involving them in issues they deemed important, and highlighted existing practices that were consonant with the tenets of quality. Although every opportunity to engage faculty was explored, training and involvement was voluntary for them.

At Babson, they needed to do a lot more than just teach total quality. They needed to use total quality tools and principles to manage their college in both the academic and administrative areas. They believed total quality would help them to realize their vision of becoming an international leader in management education.

In 1989 Xerox Corporation hosted the first Quality Forum, a gathering of academic and business leaders, in which total quality and its role on U.S. campuses (particularly at business and engineering schools) was discussed. Academia was charged with the challenge not only of teaching the concepts of total quality, but also of using quality as a way to run their organisations. Babson College listened to what industry leaders were telling them, and had responded accordingly. Within the four years they made substantial changes in the following four areas.

(i)   Teaching total quality management

(ii)   Research in the area of total quality

(iii)   Curriculum development

(iv)   Using total quality in running the institution.

4.6.3 USING TOTAL QUALITY AS A WAY TO MANAGE THE INSTITUTION

Utilizing a total quality philosophy at Babson can be traced to the development of the Strategic Plan 1991 –95. The development of the plan involved over 130 members of the Babson community, including faculty, administrators, students, alumni, and trustees. The planning process translated major college goals into specific objectives, with timetables and methods for evaluating results.

In a letter to the Babson community dated February 27, 1992, President William Glavin stated that

in order to be successful, we need to coordinate the adoption and implementation of the principles of total quality in the classroom as well as in the way we operate the college to help us achieve the mission and goals we all agreed to in our strategic plan. To that end, we will establish an Office of Quality to oversee all our quality efforts. That office will be responsible for the management and coordination of our training and implementation programmes. The Office of Quality will be structured in such a way that both the academic and administrative efforts are integrated.

A main goal of the Office of Quality is development of an organisational infrastructure to facilitate total quality implementation. The model, to be detailed, was developed using the Shiba model. Specific elements of each of the infrastructure areas are as follows.

◻ *Goal Setting* involves articulating what we want to achieve with respect to total quality. This includes results as well as process-related goals. At Babson, this was achieved through the incorporation of quality goals into the current evaluation system and preparation of strategic plan for quality that includes specific goals for the next five years.

◻ *Organisation setting* involves deploying the necessary resources for implementation. This could involve setting up an Office of Quality or deploying a champion in the organisation who reports to the highest level in the organisation (president, dean). This individual will own the initiative. The individual in charge should be a strategic thinker, well- respected, a good communicator (and listener), and have hands-on capability (a doer). At Babson, they have two directors of quality: one from the administrative ranks and one tenure-track faculty member. This ensures that both perspectives are accounted for as the implementation strategy proceeds.

◻ *Training and education* involves enabling people with tools and techniques. Decisions must be made regarding the content and length of training based upon the individual needs of the institution. At Babson, their basic training

involves a heavy focus on the tools and techniques of quality management, with specific focus on work process analysis. A significant proportion of the training is dedicated to effective meeting skills, in order to enable a more disciplined and effective process for meetings.

❑ *Promotion* involves flyers, newsletters, and other written materials as well as visual display and promotional events to pique interest and enthusiasm. At Babson, they host two open houses a year, where they celebrate their progress and recognize team efforts. They also submit information on their quality initiative to the student and employee newsletters on a regular basis.

❑ *Diffusion of success stories* is a mechanism to learn from others and includes communication of specific means and results, the methodology applied by particular teams, and so forth. At Babson, they profile team initiatives, approaches, and results during quality open houses, and teams make presentations to other work groups on their progress, results, challenges, and key learning experiences. In addition, they have two storyboards placed in strategic locations on the campus that profile the methodology and results from quality initiatives of specific teams.

❑ *Incentives and awards* include incentives for teamwork and involvement in total quality, and recognition and reward systems that encourage involvement. This is perhaps one of the most important areas for higher education, particularly with regard to faculty. Modification of the reward and recognition system needs very careful consideration in order to facilitate involvement. At Babson, they have modified the faculty load system in order to encourage participation in activities that further the goals of the institutions. In administrative areas, modification of the performance management system is placing importance on involvement in team-based improvement efforts. Monetary rewards are perhaps not appropriate to nonprofit organisations, but there is much they are doing to recognize participation via certificates, notes, announcements, special luncheons, and the like.

❑ *Diagnosis and monitoring* involves a plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle of the overall total quality initiative, which allows modification if necessary. As a

result their initial PDCA started working more closely with the cabinet on inspecting the process and furthering team motivation. They developed additional training opportunities in response to employee needs. In the future they plan to do a self-evaluation with the Baldrige criteria in order to understand where our strengths and opportunity areas exist. A long-term goal of the Office of Quality is to ensure that key processes have been identified within all divisions. This involves identifying the outputs of all processes, determining customer requirements, flowcharting the work process, and determining if work processes are capable of consistently meeting customer requirements. Once processes have been identified and measured, a quality cost review will be conducted in order to determine the costs associated with not meeting customer requirements in the most efficient and effective manner, and to identify opportunities.

Corporate models might suggest moving linearly, in development of the organisational infrastructure. In higher education it is probably important to initially obtain buy-in before setting goals and objectives and driving the process. Starting with promotion, limited training and education are mechanisms to pique interest and prove the value of involvement and the resulting benefits that can be obtained. Highlighting the results of pilot projects can add support for institutional commitment to total quality. Without a conscientious effort to mobilize an organisation infrastructure for quality, it is doubtful that the initiative will be successful because all elements are necessary in order to enable a system-wide integrated, comprehensive and compatible initiatives.

Babson's top management (cabinet) participated in total quality training in 1992 and has been involved in a number of quality-related retreats. They have been involved in several projects in order to showcase the quality tools and concepts they learned and serve as model for senior and mid-level managers (Engelkemeyer, 1995: 151- 155).

4.7 QUALITY PERSPECTIVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

4.7.1 BACKGROUND TO INSTITUTIONAL SELF-EVALUATION AND QUALITY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Higher Education institutions in the United Kingdom are subject to a range of external quality monitoring procedures. These are complemented by a variety of internal mechanisms to assure quality of standards. Traditionally, British universities have had a high degree of autonomy. In the 1960s, a binary system of higher education was introduced with the development of a polytechnic sector. The polytechnics had far less autonomy: they were initially controlled by local authorities and were subject to inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), in the same way as schools in the public sector. Furthermore, the polytechnics initially had no degree awarding powers, and graduates received their award from the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA).

The CNAA introduced a peer validating procedure to ensure that potential courses in the polytechnics were of an appropriate nature, based on a review procedure that examined potential curricula, syllabus content, staffing, teaching and learning methods, learning resources, and so on. This validation process, initially very inquisitorial, became slowly delegated to the polytechnics. The polytechnics became incorporated in the early 1990s; moving out of local authority control, and following the ending of the binary system in the 1990s were given degree-awarding powers. However, despite the increased autonomy of the new universities (as the polytechnics became known) they retained many of the systems that had been put in place under CNAA. Although no longer subject to HMI inspections, most new universities retained a rigorous system of periodic review and validation of courses inherited from CNAA (Geall, Harvey & Moon, 1997: 187).

With the imminent ending of the binary divide in British higher education, increasing pressure was placed on the old universities to be more accountable and open to scrutiny. Apart from HMI inspections of teacher-training provision in universities, there had been no tradition of accountability in the old universities sector, outside the need to demonstrate that some courses fulfilled the requirements for professional-body accreditation. First attempts to breach the closely guarded autonomy of the old universities came via the introduction of a process of Academic Audit, instituted under the auspices of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom (CVCP). Academic Audit involved a review of the mechanisms within a university for assuring quality. It did not, according to Geall, et al (p.187), attempt to assess the quality of teaching and learning at a subject level, much less comment on the adequacy of academic standards. Academic Audit subsequently became a division of the newly created Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), wholly owned by the CVCP.

Academic Audit was an attempt to thwart closer inspectorial control of provision by external, governmental, agencies. In the event it failed and a process of Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) was introduced under the auspices of the newly constituted Funding Councils (one each for England, Scotland and Wales). TQA was subject-based, involved self-assessment, peer visits and statistical indicators and included direct observation of teaching.

The Funding Councils also evaluated research, nominally to ensure that public money provided for university research was used efficiently and to best effect. The Research Assessment Exercise, a paper-based evaluation, is directly linked to the distribution of research monies and tends to occupy the (older) universities to a much larger extent than does teaching quality assessment. Williams and Loder (1990: 9) also held the view that the relationship between quality and resource allocation is not unambiguous. Is quality weakness something to be penalized or is it a reason for additional resources to try to overcome the

weakness? The Funding Council had been explicit in its position to provide extra funding for high quality research, and yet there was no clarity on how good quality teaching was to be rewarded.

The upshot of the changes in external quality monitoring in the UK in the 1990s is that institutions are faced with five main forms of external monitoring:

- Academic audit of institutional quality assurance procedures.
- Teaching quality assessment on a subject basis.
- Research evaluation via the research assessment exercise, on a subject basis.
- Professional body validation and accreditation (in some subject areas).
- Inspection of teacher- training provision, now under the control of the Teacher-Training Agency.

In addition, UK higher education has a long tradition of external examining, in which subject peers from other universities literally examine the assessed work of students in other institutions in an attempt to maintain standards across the system. Ramsden (1998: 80) notes this culture in that *"just as good teachers actively listen to their students, so good academic leaders listen to what their colleagues say about their experiences of the academic environment and academic leadership"*. There are problems with the effectiveness of the external examining system given the enormous growth in higher education and the increasing diversification of the sector. Nonetheless, external examiners are seen as the mainstay of standards. The system is somewhat curious inasmuch as externals are invited and appointed by the universities and have no responsibility to external bodies, other than, in some cases, to professional and regulatory bodies which may also have nominated external examiners (Geall, Harvey & Moon, 1999: 189).

External monitoring in the UK is likely to go through further changes in the next few years following the creation of a new Quality Assurance Agency, charged

with rationalizing the work previously undertaken by the Quality Assessment Divisions of the Funding Councils and the Academic Audit division of the Higher Education Quality Council. In the wake of the Dearing Committee report, it is also likely that the new agency will be asked to review the Research Assessment Exercise; to identify ways to enhance the external examiner system; and to ensure that quality procedures place more emphasis on academic standards. For example, the system of selecting external examiners is likely to change following the recommendation that there should be a pool of academic staff, which is recognised by the Quality Assurance Agency, from which institutions will be required to select their external examiners (Geall, Harvey & Moon, 1999: 190).

The emphasis of most external quality monitoring in the United Kingdom has been on accountability rather than improvement. The HEQC has, since its inception, had a Quality Enhancement Division, but its impact has been far less profound than that of Audit, given the predominately accountability and value for money approach of the British Government.

Internal quality monitoring in British universities has both preceded the growth in external monitoring in the 1990s and has also responded to it. Internal validation and review, especially in the old polytechnic sector, was well established prior to any external monitoring, which meant, for example, that those institutions already had procedures in place prior to the advent of the Academic Audit. This was not always the case with some of the older universities, who found themselves clarifying and documenting procedures for the first time when auditors were invited in to explore quality assurance processes. On the other hand, some of the external monitoring procedures has led to additional internal procedures or the realignment of internal procedures to mesh with external processes.

The following is an attempt to indicate the broad range of internal procedures currently practiced in English universities. The University of Central England in Birmingham, one of the "new universities", will be used as a case study. The role

of student feedback in internal quality monitoring is also explored, as this is an essential item in the University's approach to quality monitoring, and an important element nationally, as students are major stakeholders in higher education.

4.7.2 INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES TO QUALITY MONITORING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Institutions collect a wide range of data about the services they provide, including:

- ❑ Surveys of student views.
- ❑ Internal peer review of teaching.
- ❑ Internal audits of quality procedures.
- ❑ External reviews of teaching and research
- ❑ Professional body scrutiny of programmes.
- ❑ Surveys of recent graduates.
- ❑ Employer views of graduates.

These activities generate the following two types of data about stakeholder views of university provision:

- ❑ Threshold judgements relating to standards, comparability or accountability for public funds.
- ❑ Quality judgements.

According to Williams, in the UK, the external examining system has

> " . . . become a means of maintaining a kind of balance between institutional or departmental autonomy and external inspection on the one hand, and a defense against the encroachment of institutional managerialism on professional and departmental autonomy on the other." (1997: 86).

The key question according to Geall, et al (1999: 192- 193) is "What do you do with the data?" In particular, how is the data used to change anything? How does it fit into institutional quality improvement policies and processes? To be effective in quality improvement, data collected from surveys and peer reviews must be transformed into information that can be used within an institution to effect change. Furthermore, this information must be linked into a process of feedback and action. In short, there must be a means to close the loop between data collection and effective action.

This requires that the institution have in place a system for:
- identifying responsibility for action;
- encouraging ownership of plans of action;
- accountability for action taken or not taken;
- feedback to generators of the data;
- Committing appropriate resources.

Establishing this is not an easy task, which is why so much data generated by surveys or peer reviews is not used to effect change, irrespective of the good intentions of those who initiate the inquiries. This involves encouraging a bottom-up quality improvement process alongside a top-down accountability requirement. However, though such an emphasis on team-work and collaboration lies at the centre of calls in the UK for a move towards greater institutional self-regulation, there is a danger that a number of complexities may remain hidden by the results from staff survey and evidence from external reports (Newton, 1999: 31).

Management, in this approach, has six strategic functions in respect of quality improvement:
- Setting the parameters within which the quality improvement process takes place;

□ Establishing a non-exploitative, suspicion-free context in which a culture of quality improvement can flourish;

□ Establishing and ensuring a process of internal quality monitoring;

□ Disseminating good practice through an effective and open system of communication;

□ Encouraging and facilitating team working amongst academic and academic-related colleagues;

□ Delegating responsibility for quality improvement to the effective units that are going to deliver continuous improvement at the staff-student interface (Geall, et al, 1999: 194).

Two types of managerial structures as outlined below largely characterise higher education:

□ A "collegiate" structure in which lines of accountability are diffuse and often implicit, and where academic managers are often elected.

□ A hierarchical structure in which lines of accountability are focused and explicit and professional managers are appointed.

It is potentially easier for the hierarchical structure to implement a top-down accountability system, although it is much harder for it to ensure ownership of, and involvement in, the quality improvement process, rather than mere compliance with managerial requirements. Conversely, the collegiate system would appear to be better able to encourage ownership, although a real willingness to account for action may be a more difficult procedure to implement.

Perhaps the most basic anxiety among academics is that quality systems and quality monitoring, whether externally or internally driven, are essentially a managerialist tool, which threaten academic or professional autonomy. As De Vries (1997: 51) argues, regarding the growing influence of quality management principles in higher education, "the academic community has viewed this ideology as the means by which university administrators have sought to gain

control of the quality of its work". University managers and administrators, he argues, "arrogate to themselves the power to require compliance with the systems of monitoring, review and accountability" (De Vries, 1997: 57). Alderman (1996) as cited by Newton (1999: 19) has charted the hostile reactions in England to the introduction by the state of external teaching quality assessment at programme and subject levels, a development which Trow (1994: 43) describes as an example of "hard managerialism" and as an attempt to "control the uncontrollable". Whether conceived of as being of the 'hard' or 'soft' variety, it is difficult to escape the view that much activity in the UK higher education since the legislative changes of 1992 (HMG, 1992) has been devoted, at sector and institutional levels, to changing the behaviour and practices of academics through quality management.

For Shore and Roberts (1995: 8), in their discussion of the emergence of the panopticon paradigm, 'current education policy can be usefully analysed in terms of discourses of power and their relation to systems of control and bureaucratic surveillance'. Managing for quality (HEQC 1995: 158) refers to the use of:

> psychological . . . forms of encouragement and persuasion to assist implementation of quality management initiatives: the authors of the case studies report using a variety of mechanisms to develop support for change and for neutralising resistance.

4.7.3 THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ENGLAND IN BIRMINGHAM: A CASE STUDY

The University of Central England in Birmingham (UCE) has an extensive set of processes and procedures for internal quality monitoring. The various procedures include:

- ❑ Student feedback of the total student experience of learning at an institutional level (Student Satisfaction).
- ❑ Monitoring of teaching quality at a faculty level (using peer review, self-assessment and student feedback) linked to individual performance review (IPR).
- ❑ Accreditation and validation of programmes of study (including employer and professional body feedback where appropriate).
- ❑ Approval, registration and examination of research degree students.
- ❑ Internal audits of aspects of university regulations and practices.
- ❑ Annual monitoring reports from programmes of study, including module-level feedback from students.
- ❑ Receipts and review of reports of external examiners and moderators.
- ❑ Faculty-level monitoring of services guaranteed in Student Charters.
- ❑ Evaluation of research development, monitoring the expenditure of money obtained via the Research Assessment Exercise.

The approach goes well beyond that used in most universities in Britain and other countries. In a recent external audit of its quality assurance procedures (HEQC 1995:32) UCE was commended for the extent, clarity and rigour of its processes. So extensive is the quality monitoring at UCE that the HEQC Academic Audit report cautions about proliferation and suggests that, despite the consultation and carefully planned introduction of quality monitoring procedures, the university might *"consider the advisability of keeping under careful review the increasing scale and complexity of internal quality assurance monitoring arrangements at all levels of the institution"*. During the audit, the team of auditors advanced the view

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that the internal system might be over-elaborate and that there appeared to be excessive monitoring. The unanimous response from those audited was that it was better to be over-cautious than have an underdeveloped quality monitoring process (HEQC 1995:8).

Although the array of procedures at UCE are more than most institutions are likely to have, they do encompass the range of alternatives, relating to higher education, to be found within English universities. There are clear lines of accountability, responsibility and information flows in the university. The ways that external processes mesh with internal ones are clearly articulated at UCE. In a sense, however, external quality monitoring processes (EQM) add another layer to the extensive internal quality monitoring (IQM) processes and reporting procedures (Geall, et al, 1999: 197; Harvey, 1995a; 1995b). In his work on 'continuous quality improvement' and the 'new collegialism', Harvey noted that:

> *Part of the responsiveness of higher education must, at least in the medium term, involve a recognition of an obligation to external quality monitoring processes . . . what is required is an internal quality approach that meshes with external requirements* (1995b: 39).

In conclusion, internal and external quality monitoring are not static processes. They develop in response to, among other things, political and economic climates. This has been seen in the United Kingdom over the last decade in response to changes such as the removal of the binary divide between universities and polytechnics, the political climate of public services having to be more accountable to the government and the public, and the rapid expansion of higher education. Over the next few years we shall see developments in response to a new government, the recommendations from the Dearing Committee review and subsequent policy changes, and the restructuring of the Quality Assurance Agency. However, we can conclude that, if quality monitoring is to be used to enhance the experience of students in higher education, then

systems will need to be responsive to key stakeholders (including students and staff). Quality monitoring needs to result in action and be more than just a fact-finding or paper pushing exercise. Also, continual enhancement needs to become more central to the debate and not just a by-product of accountability.

4.8 IMPLICATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS ON QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The case studies presented in this chapter demonstrate that the relationship between governance arrangements and quality assurance in higher education are informed by broader national and international agendas. According to Bitzer & Malherbe (1995: 49), "quality assurance in higher education, has indeed become an international phenomenon with different approaches and applications". Similarly, Lategan (1999: 74) contends that the globalisation movement towards quality assurance is, in a manner of speaking, no novelty in university education. According to Harker (1995: 36), "it has partially been the cost of financing equity and access, which have resulted in the recasting of the value of the modern university in performative and economic terms". These arguments, therefore, make the South African higher education system to become a serious player in both the national and international quality assurance movement.

While Strydom (1999: 104- 105) argues that "it becomes important to critically evaluate policy development and formulation at especially the macro- and meso-level of quality assurance", at another level, institutions of higher learning are required to establish their own quality management systems. Quality management systems can, of course, also be established at various institutional levels such as faculties, departments, units, etc. "In this way, the overall responsibility for assuring quality is placed as close as possible to the individual organisation or sub-unit providing the educational service" (Lategan, 1999: 12)..

Some international contributions (Van Damme, 2000: 10- 19; Woodhouse 2000: 20- 27), suggest that

> "state control or steering of national QA system tends to be more direct in the early phases of the system, but that as the system matures, this becomes unnecessary and the state's touch may become lighter and even indirect".

In the South African context, transformation imperatives such as the reconfiguration of system to meet national human resource development needs, relevance, efficiency, equity, redress and cost effectiveness is not different from developments elsewhere in the world. Australia is a case in point in that the waves of change have necessitated that institutions of higher learning reposition themselves in accordance with the economic considerations, and by and large move towards the amalgamation of institutions. This approach seems to manifest itself in the higher education developments in South Africa.

Kotecha & Luckett (2000: 206) argue that "it is only through significant pressures from the state that different institutions are likely to be "persuaded" to adopt new identities, functions and missions". Like in the UK and Australia, the state intervention led to the abolition of the binary divide in higher education, and yet South Africa is grappling with how to rationalise the system and possibly do away with the a binary divide because it has implications for quality assurance mechanisms, as illustrated in Chapter 2. Lessons from these countries are valuable for the evolving QA system in this country especially in relation to how systemic and institutional governance influence developments in quality assurance. International experience, according to Van Damme 2000; Verkleij 2000; Newton 2000; Woodhouse 2000 suggests that "a QA system should not be allowed to become fixed or static in its design, but rather that it should evolve dynamically as the system matures and as diminishing returns set in for particular procedures".

The establishment of the HEQC in South Africa as one of the governance structures is not dissimilar to the HEQC (now QAA in Higher Education) in the UK, the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CQAHE) in Australia and the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit (NZUAA) Unit. These international structural arrangements are yet another comparison that enriches the South African higher education system by learning from the mistakes and good practices elsewhere.

The accountability regime in New Zealand has affected the restructuring of higher education to an extent that institutional governance was under serious consideration. Governing councils that had wide representation from many sectors of the society were significantly reduced by legislation to have fewer members appointed by the Ministry of Education. This comparison to the South African situation is the opposite to the situation in New Zealand. On the contrary, representation in the governing councils have included other stakeholders as outlined in Chapter 2, to an extent that there are issues around role clarification of councillors in relation to management as will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. This, nevertheless, is a characteristic of the transformed institutional governance structures that were exclusive and discriminatory in the previous dispensation in South African higher education.

Another implication for the international comparison is the culture of "quality audits" in higher education. New Zealand first engaged in self-evaluation processes, and then moved to institutional audits. The United States engaged in the "rethinking of the QA processes" and moved more towards a market oriented approach with continuous quality improvement (CQI) or total quality (TQ) receiving prominence in some institutions. The participation of senior management in quality training on "how to run an institution" in the US compares favourably with the blueprint published by Piper (1993: vol. 1:21) on "the overall governance of the institution" in Australia. Consciousness is growing in South Africa for HEIs to reshape some aspects of their operations as well as

preparation for institutional audits that will be conducted by the HEQC. These are largely along the lines of self-evaluation as it has been the case in other countries.

As part of its implementation strategy, the HEQC in South Africa could provide guidelines for all HEIs and undertake capacity- building and the sharing of best practices where internal systems are found to be lacking. This does not mean that a single blueprint for QA should be imposed on all HEIs. On the contrary, a variety of internal QA systems should be encouraged and HEIs should be advised to develop systems which are in keeping with their differentiated functions and with the particular cultures and "lifeworlds" of their staff and students – i.e. those who will have to use the QA systems.

The HEQC could provide a framework and broad guidelines for the establishment of such internal self-evaluation systems – for example, to ensure that if it focuses on the teaching-learning interface then it should become sufficiently institutionalised. This could "ensure that the quality function is integrated into line management functions so that the self-evaluation procedures do result in effective decision-making and action for improvement" (Muller, 1997: 37). This approach would also follow the advice given by Verkleij (2000: 87) that "the design of a QA system should begin at institutional level with self-reflection". These international experiences have assisted the South African HEIs to recognise that quality assurance is primarily their responsibility, and for that reason, governance and management arrangements should be put in place first before QA systems are developed. Setting up accountability structures for quality assurance demonstrates the effectiveness of policies and practices for QA. The UK example of the "bottom-up" Quality Improvement and the "top-down" Accountability requirements ties up with the HEQC's approach to quality as value for money. An implication for this comparison in South Africa is that governance structures are subjected to public scrutiny through the review of their QA mechanisms in higher education

Another dimension to the international comparison, if we follow Van Damme's four functions of a national QA system, apart from the improvement of teaching and learning via self-evaluation, other functions which would need to be addressed are "ensuring public accountability, providing client information and market transparency" and in some cases such as ours assisting the state to steer the transformation agenda. The last three functions would all "require some sort of external assessment not only of institutional quality management systems, but also of the actual quality on HEIs' inputs, processes and outputs" (Van Damme, 2000: 10).

International experience suggests that, "...it is in working out the tensions between the first and the other three functions that national QA systems can easily go wrong". For example, Van Damme states that it is at this stage that a shift in power is usually experienced in HEIs from academics to managers, who in turn increasingly wield power on behalf of the state. Scholars point to the change in internal relations and equilibria provoked by quality assurance policies and systems

> *A shift in power towards the managerial top of institutions, parallel with an increasing professionalism of management personnel has been one of the most important consequences . . . the increasing autonomy and the development of QA systems have moved the political power of the state in the institutions themselves, with rectors' conferences acting as a bridgehead of the state* (Van Damme, 2000: 15).

This inevitably causes resentment amongst the "managed" who perceive QA to be driven by managerial and external interests and to threaten academic and institutional autonomy (Newton, 1999: 18). A "hands-off" approach to academic matters was followed in Australia in bid to safeguard institutional autonomy.

In South Africa, we are advised by Newton (2000: 79) to acknowledge tensions up-front and more importantly to utilise them as "a basis for intervening with purpose, since it provides a basis for understanding prior to design and intervention". At a more general level Newton warns that institutional contexts always interfere with planned change, for change has emergent properties and is always unpredictable. Newton warns that

> *Quality can only be understood relative to how actors construe and construct "quality" and the "quality system". Situational factors relating to context and actors' subjectivities prevent accountability and improvement from being reconciled and undermine the implementation of the referred quality policy.*

Writing from the British experience, Newton suggests that one of the greatest challenges in establishing a viable QA system is to gain and maintain the trust of academics and thus to avoid its degeneration into compliance – "ritualism", "tokenism" and "game-playing". In our context, the challenge is to determine appropriate ways to encourage innovation and improvement (Kotecha & Luckett, 2000: 208).

Jacobs (2000: 71- 72) and Strydom (2000: 8- 9) warn against the so-called "quality overkill", such that, time, energy and cost constraints force academics to adopt a "getting by" approach to quality. Newton (2000: 80) also advises that "if the system is not to become discredited, one needs to ensure that adequate resources are available at the operational level to ensure that the identified "quality gaps" can indeed be closed". This challenge faces the governance at all levels, particularly at institutional level to ensure that if they need to influence quality assurance mechanisms in their institutions, they would have to consider adequate resources for QA in the manner that the Australian government set the pace initially. A contentious issue is South Africa is that there are competing priorities in higher education, and quality is just one of them. The international

approaches to quality depend much on the marketability of institutions abroad and the availability of resources other than what the state provides. How to deal with the tension between establishing a coherent national system and the demands of operating in a global market is the question that the HEQC on the one hand, and HEIs on the other, should deal with in an attempt to encourage international benchmarking.

Another tension referred to above, which both the HEQC and HEIs will need to address, is the one between nation-building and globalisation. The former requires building local coherence into the higher education system, whilst the latter is likely to result in fragmentation and even greater diversity. As a young democracy South Africa is obliged to ensure that its national assets (in this case, HEIs) are employed to further its human resource development and knowledge production needs. However, given the trade liberalisation of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR), the entry into South Africa of a multitude of private higher education providers and the demand to operate competitively in a global market, the HEQC will need to address, as a matter of urgency, the issue of international benchmarking and the regulation and quality assurance of private providers, thereby protecting the interests of public higher education.

It would be simpler to advocate a "two-stage revolution" (transformation) i.e. to first deal with national transformation and thereafter deal with internationalisation and QA on an international scale. But current realities suggest that this will not be possible (Kotecha & Luckett, 200: 209). Thus the HEQC is likely to have to engage with the international dimension of QA fairly early on in its activities. Following Woodhouse (2000: 21), this phase would allow a more diversified and pluralistic approach to QA in which there need not necessarily be a one to one relationship between an HEI and an external quality assurance agency (EQAA). Woodhouse (2000: 24- 25) paints a scenario where national EQAAs begin to operate across national boundaries and independent EQAAs operate

internationally via benchmarking clubs, consortia and professional associations, etc. He also predicts that HEIs themselves will not exist as coherent entities for much longer and will themselves become "brokers, co-ordinators and credentiallers" for a variety of educational providers.

This complex scenario suggests a more mature stage of a QA system in which steering by the state and its agencies are no longer necessary. Instead, individual institutions and organisations organise their own QA, to their own market advantage, via a range of mechanisms, which would need to be co-ordinated by "external quality managers". Presumably, at this stage, an external quality agency would only need to play a brokering and co-ordinating role. Woodhouse cited by Kotecha and Luckett (2000: 209) suggests that eventually, the function of national QAAs could wither away altogether.

International experience (viz Verkleij) tells us that over time, national QA systems tend to result in diminishing returns. They also tend to push HEIs towards uniformity and homogenisation. This suggests that the HEQC will need to adopt a dynamic approach to QA and as the system develops and learns and as the external environment changes, it will need to keep adjusting and refining the demands it makes on HEIs – i.e. it will need to keep changing the rules of the game, as it has been the case in the UK, Australia and the United States.

Furthermore, given the actual and the planned diversity of our HE system and the different stages of development of different institutions, the HEQC may well need to allow institutions to operate at different phases of the QA system. Some, with already well developed internal QA systems may well be ready to move on, whilst others may need nurturing for some time (Kotecha & Luckett, 2000: 209; Strydom, 2000: 8). This is as a result of the unevenness in the South African system as discussed in Chapter 1 and 2.

This will make the HEQC's work a difficult balancing act between meeting a national nation-building agenda as well as operating in a global market, between devolving responsibility for QA whilst still driving a national QA agenda, between fostering improvement whilst ensuring accountability. In the words of Woodhouse, (2000: 26), it will therefore need to be "maximally flexible, maximally cost-effective and minimally intrusive", this presents an enormous intellectual, political and practical challenge.

In many QA systems overseas, it is assumed that QA for accountability will automatically result in improvements in practice as a spin-off from the threat of external scrutiny. However, research and international experience suggests that this is not necessarily the case and that all that happens is that people learn to play the "quality game" better (Yorke 1999, Harvey, 1995).

Finally, it is evident from this discussion that governance and quality are inseparable. The two pillars of QA, namely, improvement and accountability complement each other. Some countries are guided by accountability considerations (value for money), whereas others are focusing on a "light touch" improvement dimension that is nurturing the academic sector of HEIs. Whatever the focus is, international perspectives on quality assurance are influenced by the transformation agenda at both the system and institutional levels.

4.9 CONCLUSION

The South African national quality assurance system, although it is at an embryonic stage, has much to benefit from other experiences in the world. The dedicated academics and administrators are demonstrating their commitment to the national policy priorities, with quality assurance underpinning all of them. It is only through quality assurance and self- evaluation that our higher education system can be considered to be reliable and credible.

Experiences from Australia have taught us that if government is serious about redressing the imbalances and even building the human resource capacity, it has to, as a matter of fact invest heavily in the development of a quality assurance system. The HEQC ought to be adequately resourced and well- trained in order to carry the mandate of building a better future for all.

> *It is not enough to have quality. Quality also has to be maintained and guaranteed. In higher education, quality assurance is the collective term for institutional activities, policies, and procedures that provide a measure of confidence that what is done academically is consistent with the institution's goals and is likely to effect learning at levels established by the institution or by external bodies.* (Whitaker, 1989: 73).

In this chapter the international trends on QA demonstrate the pressures faced by the South African QA system at both national and institutional levels. Of importance is how these QA considerations interface with the governance imperatives in a post-apartheid South Africa. The international perspectives provide a solid base for the empirical study undertaken in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER 5

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to craft the road map to be used in addressing the research problem in this study. The research problem statement, put succinctly is 'how do transformed institutional structures of governance influence quality assurance mechanisms in higher education in this country'. This problem is triggered by the state of flux in which institutions of higher learning find themselves as a result of the transformation agenda of the state and all its organs.

This chapter describes the research design, that is, the plan for carrying out the study. It provides a detailed discussion of the research methodologies used in this study, the appropriateness of the selected research methods in terms of the nature, specific research problem and the aims of this study. Furthermore, it emphasises the complementarity of the quantitative and the qualitative research methods for this particular study. Quantitative techniques in this study are used to broadly assess and analyse the specific governance structures at institutional level and examine how they influence quality assurance arrangements in higher education. The historical classifications of institutions, as outlined in Chapters 1 and 6 are used to explore possible trends in relation to quality assurance.

Qualitative techniques are employed to gain greater in-depth insight into the complexities of the issues and possible contextual tensions. Using a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods enhances the validity of the study and these approaches to educational research should be seen as

complementary to the broader social discourse of educational research (Waghid, 2000:25). This use of different methods of gathering data with different samples, at different times, or in different places – to compare different approaches to the same thing (McMillan, 2000:272) is termed triangulation. This approach is used in this study by triangulating the questionnaire responses with the interview responses in an attempt to identify clear patterns. This chapter illustrates, through discussion, diagrams and tables, the approaches between these equally important methodologies and how each serves as complementary pillars in this study.

5.2   RESEARCH PARADIGM

The main thrust of this study is on the South African higher education transformation agenda and how it impacts on institutional quality imperatives. The research question aims to address whether the transformed institutional governance structures have any influence on quality assurance mechanisms, and if so, to what extent given the context of the historical backgrounds of institutions of higher learning? Structures that are looked at are the governing Councils, Senates and the Institutional Forums.

The quality focus that is investigated in relation to these structures, has to do with the notions of quality as outlined in Chapter 3, as well as the quality management systems that may be applicable in higher education such as the Total Quality Management and elements of the conformance to standards (specifications) models.

This research paradigm entails the historical classifications of institutions (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:56), namely, the Emerging-Stable HEIs, the Uncertain-Unstable HEIs, the Entrepreneurial-Expanding HEIs, and the Traditional-Elite HEIs. This classification helps to identify institutions that have some attributes relating to

quality assurance and management systems. This classification emanates from the broader one commonly used, namely Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAIs) and the Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) in the South African context. Although the HDI-HAI classification alone is valid in the interpretation of the data in this study, it is necessary to examine the institutional responses looking at attributes that are not necessarily racial, but in line with institutional purposes and other dynamics that inform the post-apartheid South Africa. The classifications by Cloete and Bunting above, attempt to make a breakthrough in higher education research in South Africa.

5.3   RESEARCH STRATEGY

The two main research instruments employed in this study are a questionnaire, used primarily to collect quantitative data and individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, used to obtain qualitative data, to validate, supplement and provide explanations for some of the findings of the quantitative analysis. Employment of these two data collection strategies are aimed to yield:

(i)   greater insight into institutional approaches to quality, institutional impressions on the dimensions of accountability and improvement as they relate to quality assurance processes, institutional missions and strategy, efficiency and effectiveness within some international perspectives on quality

(ii)   a deeper understanding of the institutional dynamics that influence the quality perspectives in a manner that considers internal and external environmental forces that impact on the implementation of QA mechanisms

There are fundamental differences in using quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analyses and this has resulted in an on-going debate in the literature about the extent to which the characteristics of one paradigm can be utilized in the other (Smith and Heshusius, 1986; Kidder and Fine, 1987; Firestone, 1987; Gage, 1989; Reichardt and Rallis, 1994).

By way of a summary, Table 5.1 displays a comparison of these characteristics of qualitative research with the more familiar positivist-quantitative approach. Such a comparison helps to illustrate the value of combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches in this study, in order to increase the validity of the findings. In the actual conduct of this research study, differences on several points of comparison are far less rigid than the table suggests.

Table 5.1   Characteristics of Qualitative and Quantitative Research.

Point of Comparison	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Focus of research	Quality (nature, essence)	Quantity (how much, how many)
Philosophical roots	Phenomenology, symbolic interactionism	Positivism, logical empiricism
Associated phrases	Fieldwork, ethnographic, naturalistic, grounded, constructivist	Experimental, empirical, statistical
Goal of investigation	Understanding, description, discovery, meaning, hypothesis generating	Prediction, control, description, confirmation, hypothesis testing
Design characteristics	Flexible, evolving, emergent	Predetermined, structured
Data collection	Researcher as primary instrument, interviews, observations, documents	Inanimate instruments (scales, tests, surveys, questionnaires, computers)
Mode of analysis	Inductive (by researcher)	Deductive (by statistical methods)
Findings	Comprehensive, holistic, expansive, richly descriptive	Precise, numerical

Merriam, 1998:9

Broad consultations with Vice Chancellors of South African universities and technikons were initiated by the researcher. Subsequent to telephonic discussions, a more formal letter was sent to all Vice Chancellors of HEIs to explain the purpose of the study and how assistance was sought from their

institutions towards the completion of questionnaires and possible follow-up interviews with some of them. An example of the correspondence entered into between the researcher and the institutions is attached as Appendix A. This approach is informed by the purpose of the study (Dixon, 1989:13), which is to determine the extent to which the transformed institutional governance structures are influencing the quality assurance imperatives in their institutions.

An empirical investigation into the institutional approaches to quality in the light of the legislative framework in South Africa was conducted, by using a questionnaire (Appendix B) to collect the data (Borg & Gall, 1989:418). This was followed by in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with a representative group of respondents from HEIs. The discussions were informed by the interview protocol and a central question (see Appendix C), aimed at following on the institutional responses to the questionnaire.

The processes used in the planning, organisation, implementation and analysis of data, derived from both the quantitative and qualitative methods employed, are described in full in the following paragraphs.

5.4 QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

In quantitative research, a major distinction is made between non-experimental and experimental designs. This study may be classified as non-experimental research, in that the investigator has no direct influence on what has been selected for study, either because it has already occurred or because it cannot be influenced (McMillan, 2000: 9). For example, in this study, the researcher has no influence on how institutions transformed their governance structures within the framework described in Chapter 2, section 2.6. or how these structures are influencing the QA mechanisms in the institutions. This characteristic has important implications for the conclusions that are drawn, as it usually means that

the study can only describe something or uncover relationships between two or more factors. A non-experimental research design facilitates the simultaneous and effective collection of a wide range of data that describes, compares or correlates relationships in the study (McMillan, 2000: 9; Gay, 1997: 10-11).

In this study, a questionnaire (see Appendix B) is used as the research instrument for the collection of primarily quantitative data and to a limited extent, some qualitative data. It is necessary to examine the use of a questionnaire in terms of the aims of this study, consider both its merits and demerits, describe its construction, its administration and the method used to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaires.

5.4.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

(i)   to collect and interpret the perspectives of a selected group of respondents from universities and technikons in South Africa with supposed expert knowledge of the transformation of governance structures and how it impacts on their institutional quality management systems.

(ii)   To gather information on institutional approaches to quality in order to make an original contribution to the on-going discourse on quality assurance in higher education.

        To this end, data/information collected from the questionnaires is used to shed light on how institutions of higher learning in South Africa perceive themselves within the fluid higher education landscape, and how they approach the varied dimensions of quality at an institutional level.

(iii)   to stimulate and promote critical thinking and debate on issues of accountability and improvement in the area of quality assurance.

In response thereto, the extent and importance of different items/variables are compared by means of statistical analyses, followed by interviews with a smaller representative group from HEIs with the purpose of stimulating critical thinking and debate on issues of quality assurance in higher education.

(iv)   To provide a framework for institutions for building capacity within governance structures through raising their levels of awareness in relation to their fiduciary duties in tandem with the continuous improvement of quality in the academic functions of institutions.

This study is an attempt to glean pertinent information that will support governing structures in bringing about the business of quality assurance in HEIs, and also demonstrating that specialised knowledge is required in order to facilitate good practice at higher (governance) level.   It is envisaged that this purpose will build capacity within governance structures during the process of transformation, and beyond.

5.4.2 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING A QUESTIONNAIRE

The benefits of using a questionnaire far outweigh its limitations, particularly in terms of the specific purposes of this study. According to Wiersma (1985: 146), a questionnaire is still commonly used as a strategy for data collection. What is required is the careful construction of the questionnaire in order to elicit favourable responses (cf. 5.4.4.2)

According to Schnetler (1989: 44), a well-designed questionnaire boosts the reliability and validity of the data to acceptable levels of tolerance. To overcome the difficulty of poorly - constructed questionnaires, Van Dalen (1979: 156) contends that items should deal with meaningful research problems, be

structured carefully and be administered effectively to qualified respondents. This advise was followed as described in section 5.4.4.1 below.

5.4.2.1 ADVANTAGES OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

According to Dixon (1989: 19), using a questionnaire has some of the following advantages:

- Low unit costs that relate to subsistence and travel are minimal and thus become a plus factor in the employment of this tool.
- Since questionnaires are identical, the stimuli provided become identical in outlook, thereby bringing about homogeneity.
- It becomes easy to kill the distance by reaching respondents from all parts of the country.
- There is anonymity of the respondents since the names are not mentioned. In this study not even the names of the universities and technikons are mentioned in order to strengthen the validity of the responses.
- Large quantities of information could be received from respondents within a short space of time.
- Questionnaires are carefully structured and pre-coded for easy processing. Open-ended questions are kept to a minimum, as it has been the case in this study. A follow-up to these questions were largely captured in the interviews.

5.4.2.2 DISADVANTAGES OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Although there are merits for using this method of data collection, there are demerits that ought not to be overlooked as Dixon (1989: 22) indicated:

- The high non-response rates are quite common thereby posing problems of representation.
- The attitude of some respondents could be negative to the extent that they may not respond or brush through the questionnaire without providing honest responses.

□ Additionally, the impersonal nature of the instrument could frustrate respondents.

5.4.3 QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION (APPENDIX B)

In line with Van Dalen's (1979: 156) contention that "items should deal with meaningful research problems, be structured carefully, and be administered effectively to qualified respondents", attention was given to ensuring that the items in the questionnaire were constructed to enhance both the internal and external validity of the study.

The researcher, through interaction with role-players and stakeholders in higher education, such as the DoE, SAUVCA, and other forums, identified key issues relating to governance and quality. The centrality of these issues was confirmed through discussions with some of the quality assurance managers of HEIs and a questionnaire was designed around institutional governance and quality assurance imperatives.

5.4.3.1 STRUCTURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire provides background perspectives on higher education transformation and quality assurance as competing priorities. It also identified the purposes as outlined in section 5.4.1 above and provided the research paradigm for the study.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections, A, B and C.

Section A of the questionnaire concerned the legislative imperatives (transformation), institutional governance and approaches to quality. It comprised optional responses and some items were open-ended questions, aimed at providing explanations for the choices made in respective items.

Section B related to accountability and improvement dimensions in the following categories:

❑ QA processes at institutional governance structure levels

❑ Institutional mission and strategy

❑ Efficiency and Effectiveness

❑ International perspectives on quality, and

❑ Total Quality Management

In Section B, respondents were asked to denote the extent and importance of these items in the institution on a 4-point Likert scale. This structure was considered necessary from the initial discussions held with institutional quality assurance managers in identifying the critical issues regarding governance and quality assurance in the transformational context in higher education. From these discussions, emerged the conclusion that in many instances there was a discrepancy between what managers felt ought to be done or what was necessary and what actually was being done.

The theme of **Section C** was the institutional dynamics that influence the quality perspectives. This was sub-divided into:

❑ Contextual variables

❑ National policy imperatives

❑ Economic considerations, and

❑ Institutional perspectives

5.4.3.2   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Formulation of the content of the questionnaire was guided by the initial discussions with senior managers and QA managers to identify the key issues. A draft questionnaire was then distributed to peers involved in institutional management for comment and a sample of individuals, representative of the historical classification were requested to complete the questionnaire and provide

feedback on its construction, content and relevance. The construction of the questionnaire was supported by statisticians who advised on the validity of items for statistical purposes. It is essential to mention that responses in this questionnaire reach statistical significance. These were measures undertaken to increase the external validity of the instrument.

Internal validity was strengthened by including items that verified the responses within sections of the questionnaire.

5.4.4 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

5.4.4.1 COMMUNICATION

To accommodate the diverse structural arrangements in HEIs in terms of the individuals who possessed a deeper understanding of the relationship between QA and governance in each institution, Vice Chancellors were contacted by the researcher requesting permission to conduct research in their institutions on the topic, ' **The Impact of transformed institutional governance structures on QA mechanisms in South African higher education'.**

Included in the request was the identification of suitably qualified senior managers who could objectively assist in the completion of the instrument and be interviewed subsequently. Prompt feedback was given in support of the study by way of letters identifying offices and persons who were knowledgeable on issues of governance and quality in the institutions.

A request was also made that institutional policy documents such as the strategic plans, 'three-year rolling' plans, missions statements and QA policies as far as possible be made available to the researcher in order to facilitate his understanding of the institutional contexts prior to the interviews being conducted. A search was also done on institutional web sites (internet), and

most of the information about institutions was accessed (including mission statements). A limited number of institutions supplied their strategic planning documents, whereas others regard them as 'strictly confidential' documents, and could therefore not supply them. These institutional approaches should be viewed in the context of competition vs co-operation that characterises South African HEIs, as well as the sensitivities surrounding the reconfigurations of HEIs. This document analysis was a further method employed for purposes of triangulation to improve the validity of the study.

Questionnaires were sent out to all 36 HEIs and requested that at least 3 persons who were knowledgeable on the subject of the study and the institutional dynamics around transformation, to complete. Ideally these would include senior managers such as Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deans, Registrars, Institutional Planners and QA Managers. Where possible, members of councils were asked to complete the questionnaire and make themselves available for follow-up interviews.

This approach to specifically select and interview those individuals perceived as having the best understanding of institutional governance, is influenced by the purpose of the study (Dixon, 1989:13), which is to determine the extent to which the transformed institutional governance structures are influencing the quality assurance imperatives in their institutions.

5.4.4.2   QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

A total number of 108 questionnaires were distributed to 36 higher education institutions in South Africa, either by post or personal delivery in cases where institutions were in close proximity to the researcher. The researcher was later informed by one institution (HAI) that it was unable to participate due to pressing internal demands.

This resulted in the total of 35 HEIs participating in the study with an expected response of 105 questionnaires for analysis. Each institution was requested to complete at least 3 questionnaires for purposes of multiple observations. A further 6 HEIs (comprising 4 HDIs and 2 HAIs) did not return the questionnaires although they consistently expressed their willingness to participate in the study.

A total of 28 HEIs out of 36, representing 78% participated and returned questionnaires. The fact that such a high number of HEIs participated in the study gives an indication of how representative the responses are. A further 6 HEIs (comprising 4 HDIs and 2 HAIs) did not return the questionnaires although they initially expressed their willingness to participate in this study. Completed questionnaires were posted or faxed back to the researcher, and in a few cases were personally collected or delivered.

The total number of responses received in time for processing were 54 out of a possible total of 105. This represented a response rate of 51%. An attempt was made to increase the response rate by contacting respondents personally, telephonically and via the electronic mail, sending reminders for the return of the questionnaires as expected. Factors such as overseas travel, conferences and work loads, were among the reasons why some of the respondents were not able to respond in time.

There was, however, a good spread/balance between technikons and universities, and also in terms of historical classification of institutions, thereby providing a representative view of HEIs on the issues of governance and quality in South Africa. There are 16 HDIs and 19 HAIs in South Africa, with the University of South Africa not strictly falling in either of the categories. It is a dedicated distance learning institution and the third largest in the world.

The following table illustrates how representative the responses were among South African HEIs:

	Universities		Technikons		Total	
Total Number of HEIs	N 21	%	N 15	%	N 36	%
Participating HEIs	16	(57%)	12	(43%)	*28	(78%)
Participating HDIs	8	(67%)	4	(33%)	12	(43%)
Participating HAIs	*8	(50%)	8	(50%)	16	(57%)

* This figure includes the University of South Africa (UNISA)

The portfolios of the respondents were principals, vice principals, deans, registrars, institutional planners, QA managers and to a limited extent institutional forum members. Senior management was represented more than any other category in pursuance of the objective to have knowledgeable persons on the relationship of governance and quality in South African higher education.

5.4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

As indicated in section 5.4.3.1 above, the questionnaire was subdivided into 3 sections A, B and C for purposes of coherence. Data capturing for all closed items in the questionnaire was electronic, and in the case of the few open-ended questions, qualitative responses were categorised and also statistically analysed to depict possible trends. Each of the sections were analysed as follows:

5.4.5.1 SECTION A

Items that required optional responses were captured with the choice made by respondents per item, for example, a "Yes" response was captured as 1, and a "No" was captured as 2 within the coding structure extensively discussed with the research support specialists.

The open-ended questions that sought reasons or further clarification of the choices made were read carefully and categorised broadly within the themes that were common in the responses. Each of these responses were listed per number of questionnaire and given numerical codes. These were also captured electronically with the assistance of research support specialists.

After all the data was captured the researcher went through all the print-outs to trace any discrepancies with the codes initially entered by hand, and no mistakes were found. A frequency of responses was then produced from where an analysis and interpretation of the results was done in the context of the research question. This method was done for all the open-ended questions in this section.

5.4.5.2 SECTION B

This section comprised of the items that were to determine the "Extent" and "Importance" on a 4-point Likert Scale. Responses were manually coded and captured electronically and frequencies and percentages of responses per item were provided for cross checking. The coding structure for optional items that were included by the respondents was also clarified with the assistance of research support.

A combination of items was also done to determine the validity of the responses. As an example, where an institution classified itself in a particular category in Section A, it would be matched against the reasons provided for that particular

choice, and compared with the "Extent" and "Importance" attached to each of the variables in Section B such as QA processes at Council, Senate, etc. The pattern in the responses is discussed in detail in Chapter 6 to illustrate the validity and reliability of the responses given. This approach provided a combination of the responses that could be grouped as 1-2 (low) and 3-4 (high) extent or importance for purposes of interpretation of results.

This method was also followed with institutional 'own choices' of items they considered could be added to the list of items. Statistical interpretation was also done for those that made suggestions.

Statistical tests (Chi-square and / or Fisher's Exact Test) in all these items were performed to determine their significance (Keller & Warrack, 2000: 551- 555). The responses were found to be statistically significant upon application of these two tests.

5.4.5.3   SECTION C

The analysis of the data in this section was also on the frequency of responses to each of the items that were to establish the institutional dynamics to quality assurance. Responses to the items were descriptive based on the factors that either "inhibited" or "promoted" the implementation of best practice in HEIs.

These responses were also matched against the institutional classifications that were chosen in Section A with the purpose of attempting to address the research question whether the institutional governance structures influence quality assurance mechanisms in South Africa.

5.5 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Until recently, educational research had been dominated by quantitative methods and designs. Today, a variety of research methods, most notably qualitative approaches are being used (McMillan, 2000: 252; Merriam, 1998: 3). Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible. Other terms often used interchangeably are *naturalistic inquiry, interpretive research, field study, participant observation, inductive research, case study,* and *ethnography.* There are many different types of qualitative research, displaying different characteristics and aimed at achieving particular objectives, (Tesch, 1990: 58; Lancy, 1993:3; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 2; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993: 2-3) as shown by Table 5.2 below:

The purpose of Table 5.2 is to give an overview of all the types of qualitative research methods and how they interface with one another. The characteristics and examples of each of these types of qualitative research methods are briefly outlined in order to develop an understanding of why this approach was also necessary in this study.

The reason for this brief illustration is to locate the context within which this study is done, e.g. the visit to institutions (field work), observations done by the researcher in different institutions across the country, etc. This approach was used in order to have a combination of methods for a successful study, as it is evident in this thesis.

Table 5.2   Common Types of Qualitative Research in Education.

Type	Characteristics	Example
Basic or Generic	❑ Includes description, interpretation, and understanding ❑ Identifies recurrent patterns in the form of themes or categories ❑ May delineate a process	❑ Meaning-making in transformational learning (Courtenay, Merriam, and Reeves, forthcoming)
Ethnography	❑ Focuses on society and culture ❑ Uncovers and describes beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure behaviour of a group	❑ A study of twenty successful Hispanic high school students (Cordeiro and Carspecken, 1993)
Phenomenology	❑ Is concerned with essence or basic structure of a phenomenon ❑ Uses data that are the participant's and the investigator's firsthand experience of the phenomenon	❑ The role of intuition in reflective practice (Mott, 1994) ❑ Practices inhibiting school effectiveness (Aviram, 1993)
Grounded Theory	❑ Is designed to inductively build a substantive theory regarding some aspect of practice ❑ Is "grounded" in the real world	❑ A framework of describing developmental change among older adults (Fisher, 1993)
Case Study	❑ Is intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single unit or bounded system ❑ Can be combined with any of the above types	❑ A comparative case study of power relationships in two graduate classrooms (Tisdell, 1993)

Merriam, 1998:12

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5.5.1 THE VALUE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

The value of the qualitative research method for this study lies in the fundamental characteristics of this approach. The key philosophical assumption, upon which all types of qualitative research are based, is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds (Wolcott, 1980: 59; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993: 13). The main characteristic of the qualitative method in terms of this study is the following:

Qualitative researchers *are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed*, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. Qualitative research "implies a direct concern with experience as it is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone'" (Sherman and Webb, 1988:7).

This view supports the experiences undergone by institutions of higher learning in the transformation process and how they construct the meaning for quality imperatives through those experiences within their 'world' (institutional environment). In contrast to quantitative research, which takes apart a phenomenon to examine component parts (which become the variables of the study), qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole. It is assumed meaning is embedded in people's experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the investigator's own perceptions (Patton, 1985:1).

Fig. 5.1 below (McMillan, 2000:251) outlines in detail the characteristics, types, methodologies and the credibility of qualitative research in relation to the research problem. The collection of data is described in exactly the same manner that the researcher went about in this study (i.e. interviews; observation, field notes and analysis of documents).
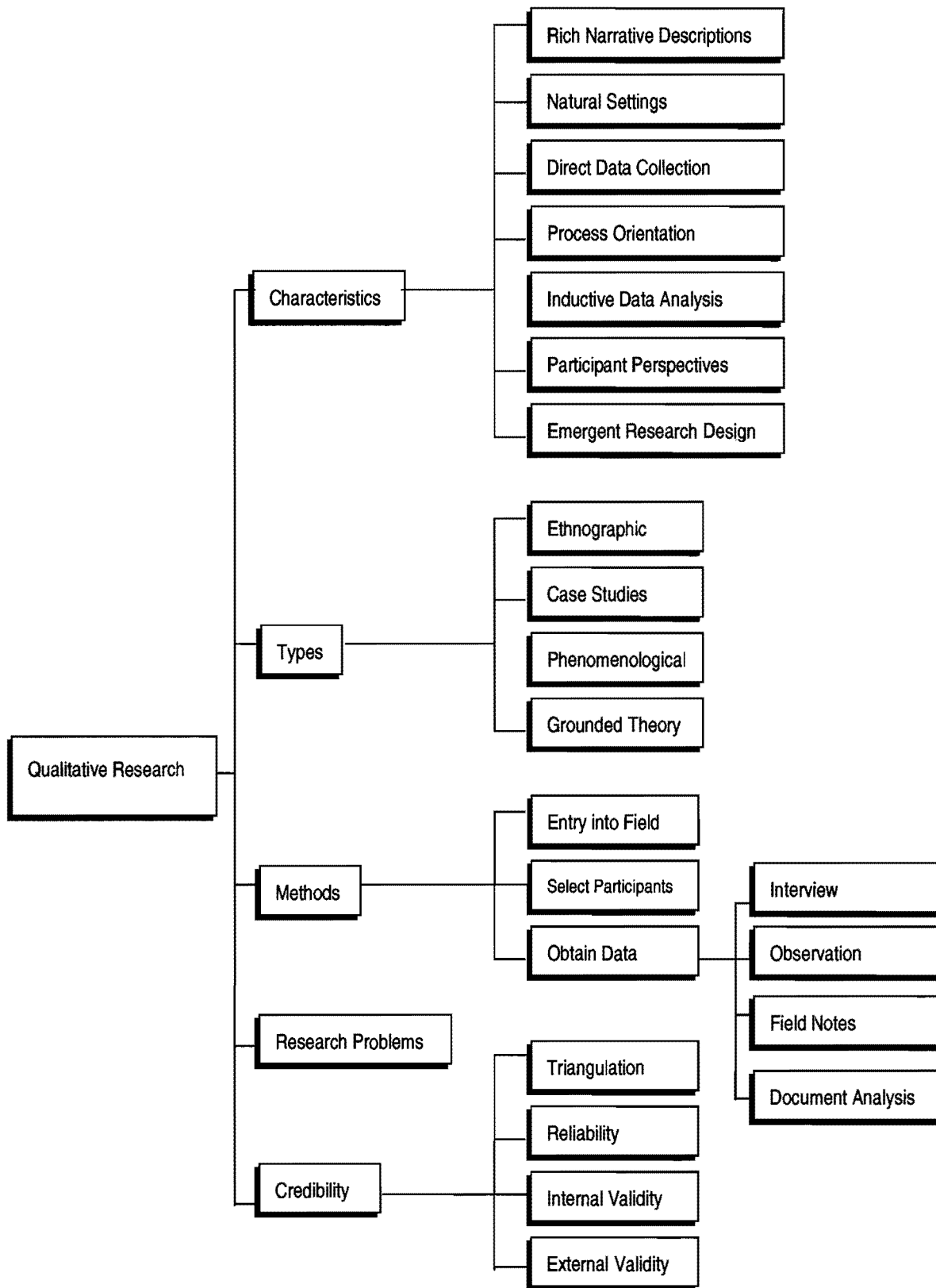
Fig. 5.1   Qualitative Research Designs.

5.5.2 SAMPLE SELECTION

Sample selection in qualitative research is usually (but not always) nonrandom, purposeful, and small, as opposed to the larger, more random sampling of quantitative research. In this study a conscious decision was made to select HEIs that fall within the broad categories of HAIs and HDIs. To that end, 6 institutions, 3 HAIs and 3 HDIs were selected depending on the access they provided into their institutions for the follow-up on the questionnaires distributed and further clarification on how their institutions viewed their governance structures in relation to quality assurance. In each case, at least three (3) interviewees were expected, and it was in only one (1) technikon HAI where the vice principal was interviewed alone when two others could not show up. An attempt was made to schedule another appointment with them but it could not be feasible. Focus group discussions of more than three participants were conducted in one HDI.

Further, the researcher selected 3 universities and 3 technikons falling within the 3 regions in the Western Cape, Kwa-Zulu- Natal, and Gauteng provinces of the Republic of South Africa. The selection was purposeful in that the institutions were representative of the following categories:

❑   a large historically Afrikaans and entrepreneurial -expanding HEI;

❑   a multi-campus historically English, traditionally elite and entrepreneurial HEI;

❑   a merging HDI with a combination of instability and expansion characteristics;

❑   the largest HDI with emerging stable characteristics;

❑   a medium sized HDI with uncertain- unstable characteristics and

❑   an HAI with entrepreneurial characteristics

This selection, the researcher believes, gave a representative group of institutions across the binary line of HEIs. One institution that is expected to merge with another, perceived 'well-resourced' as well as 'not-so well resourced' institutions, were selected in order to bring the current scenario in South African

higher education. This scenario gives a perspective that characterises the higher education milieu at this stage. In addition, this selection would also enhance the triangulation of the responses (Cassell & Symon, 1995: 2).

5.5.3 DATA COLLECTION

The primary aim of data collection and analysis in this method is to promote the emergence of substantive theory grounded in empirical data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994: 273).

The procedure followed after permission had been granted was to make an 'Interview Protocol' available to the participants. This protocol is provided as Appendix C. This is an example of how the semi-structured interviews were conducted with a group of participants. Participants ranged among levels of senior management such as Vice Chancellors, Senior Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors Academic, Vice Principals (Administration & Finance), Registrars, Institutional Planners and Quality Managers. These were respondents to the questionnaire, and were familiar with the issues raised on the relationship of their governance structures to quality assurance. Verification and clarification of the data was sought in these in-depth interviews.

Interviews were tape recorded after permission was sought and granted, and lasted for an hour or more depending on the availability of participants within their tight schedules. A common understanding of the concepts was established as discussed in Chapter 7 section 7.2). Relevant offices were also visited in some institutions to observe their QA practices. Additional relevant documentation was requested for analysis if they were available. Most of the institutions responded positively to the request. Participants were requested to complete the information sheet for record purposes and evidence of these discussions.

5.5.4 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A broad question phrased in the context of the research question was presented to all participants in no particular order, **'In your opinion, what role has the transformed institutional structures played towards the promotion and assurance of quality at your institution?"**

In order to allow flexibility and yet follow on the questionnaire responses, the interview schedule had themes that are found in the conceptual chapters as well as in the instrument in Appendix B. The sub-headings outlined and discussed are analysed in detail in Chapter 7.

These discussions were recorded and transcribed into a rich text. An introduction to all the interviews followed the same pattern.

5.5.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The processes involved in the analysis of data are the same, although some authors differ on the stages that constitute data analysis (Huberman & Miles, 1994: 429). According to Marshall & Rossman (1989: 112) qualitative data analysis is a process of building grounded theory by searching for general statements about relationships among categories of data. Although they see the process as messy, ambiguous and time consuming, they point out that it brings creativity and fascination in the order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data.

The responses to the question were coded (Seidel & Kelle, 1995: 52) within the framework provided to participants for ease of reference, and these were:

❑ Council: Accountability, fiduciary duties, policy making, strategic planning and the allocation of scarce resources

❑ Senate: academic standards, improvement approach to quality, international competitiveness of programmes, and value for money for customers

❑ Quality focus: exceptional, perfection, value for money, fitness for purpose / fitness of purpose, and transformation

❑ Institutional Forum: its role on quality issues

The data is analysed by capturing broader themes and providing evidence in 'italics' as far as the relevant points are made to the research question, and this approach made the triangulation possible. A systematic content analysis of the interview data is presented in Chapter 7 in a way that demonstrates the relationship between the questionnaire categories and responses, as well as the interview responses.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a comparison of the quantitative and qualitative research methods is made in the context of the research question. The research paradigm is also outlined in the context of the conceptual framework made in Chapter 3. The strategy followed and the characteristics of these methods are also described to support the paradigm followed in this study.

The Questionnaire as a primary instrument used for quantitative data collection as well as the interview as a tool for qualitative data collection are described with the steps followed from planning to implementation of the research strategy. In each case, the value of the methods are highlighted so as to emphasise the complementary nature of these methods, in this study that is located within a transformative framework within the higher education system in South Africa.

The quality of the research study is dependent on the efficacy of the methodology employed, and the researcher's attention has been on the issues of reliability and

validity, as well as the triangulation of results within the HDI-HAI classification of institutions of higher learning.

CHAPTER 6

CHAPTER 6

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse in detail responses to the questionnaire that was sent to higher education institutions in South Africa, to provide as far as possible, their institutional responses as to how the transformed structures of governance are influencing institutional QA mechanisms.

Particular emphasis is placed on the classification of HEIs in South Africa based on their orientations and culture as suggested by Cloete & Bunting (2000:56-57). This chapter attempts to highlight an accurate account of institutional approaches to quality, institutional impressions on the dimensions of accountability and improvement as they relate to quality assurance processes, institutional missions and strategy, efficiency and effectiveness and some international perspectives on quality. Finally, it explores the institutional dynamics that influence the quality perspectives in a manner that touches on internal and external forces that impact on the implementation of QA mechanisms. It further attempts to identify consistent differences in HAIs and HDIs in aspects of governance and quality arrangements.

6.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE: AN ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

The analysis of responses is structured in the same manner that appears in the Questionnaire (cf. Appendix B) for ease of reference.

SECTION A

LEGISLATIVE IMPERATIVES (TRANSFORMATION) AND INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

1. **Legal Framework:**

    ❑ Institutional participants were asked to give optional responses – the Yes/No questions followed by reasons or exploratory items.

    ❑ There were also open-ended questions seeking own comments or motivation for their answers.

The legal framework that is stipulated in the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997: 72(4) required that

"Councils, Senates and forums of technikons and universities, which existed at the commencement of this Act continue to exist and perform the functions which they performed prior to such commencement, but must comply with the provisions of this Act within 18 months after the commencement of this Act."

1(a)   Institutions were asked if they complied with this provision by the due date, and 94.23% responded in the affirmative, and 5.77% did not comply. The reasons mentioned for the compliance and non-compliance are indicated below to trace the elements of good practice in HEIs.

1(b)   In order to determine the elements of good practice that facilitated the compliance, 54 respondents gave 84 responses ranging among:

- Stable environment (20.25%)
- Good institutional leadership (22.62%)
- Extensive stakeholder consultations (35,71%), and
- The administrative capacity to handle the recurring demands from the state (14.29%)
- A further 7.14% gave other reasons that do not fall within the four broad categories identified above, such as "modifications/changes" in governance structures at their institutions.

This means that a significant number of respondents consider the legal framework within which they operate positively.

1(c)   Where institutions could not comply within the stipulated time frame, the greatest impediments were prolonged stakeholder discussions (28.57%), poor leadership (with no sense of urgency and cohesion) (28.57%) and parliamentary/Department of Education delays (28.57%) and to some smaller extent (14.29%), the changes to be effected in the institutional statutes.   This category represented the smaller number of institutions affected by this "non-compliance".

1(d)   Institutions were asked if there was tension between the governing Council and the Broad Transformation Forum prior to the promulgation of the Act, and 25 respondents said "Yes" and 28 said "No". Those that said "No" cited reasons, such as good management practices at their institutions, proper dissemination of information, consultations that even started much earlier than the promulgation of the Act, and general good governance at the institutions. These responses form 77.78%.

1(e)   Those that said "Yes" gave reasons such as the undemocratic Councils at their institutions, some Councils abdicated their responsibilities and the lack of understanding by councils, the Broad Transformation Forums as

well as Management what their different roles were at the institution. Such responses were 22.22%. It is clear from this response that some of the respondents opted not to give reasons as to why there were tensions of power relations between their Councils and BTFs.

An interpretation of this analysis is that institutional structural arrangements have an impact insofar as ensuring that a proper basis is set for institutional quality assurance and management systems are put in place .

❑ **Institutional Governance**

2(a)   When asked if institutional Statutes were gazetted prior to December 1999 (an extended period given to institutions by the Department of Education), 44 respondents (89.9%) said "Yes" implying good governance at their institutions. The writing up of institutional statutes is the responsibility of the governing council in terms of section 32 and 33 of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997. Where these governing structures demonstrate a conscientious effort to produce the institutional statute, it is reasonably interpreted as an element of good practice by that institution.

2(b)   Those that said "No" (5 respondents) said prolonged institutional consultations (33.3%) and the delay by parliament or non-acceptance of the Statute by the Department of Education (66.67%) were reasons for the delay of their institutional statutes.

2(c)   Similarly, the Private Acts of HEIs, with the exception of technikons, needed to be aligned with their Statute, and a 33 frequency of responses claimed that their Private Acts were in good standing. However, 13 respondents (28.26%) claimed that their Private Acts were not in alignment with the institutional statutes.

2(d)   The reasons given by 8 respondents were the delay by the Department of Education. This delay was clearly caused by the developments that culminated in the Higher Education Amendment Act of 2001 as indicated in Chapter 2 which sought to, among other things, repeal all Private Acts governing universities and subjecting all HEIs to the provisions of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and its Amendments, without exception.

2(e)   The following statement was made to elicit a "Yes" or "No" response:
"Institutions of higher learning (in this case their own institutions) were seemingly encountering difficulties and frustrations with the novel experience of sharing responsibility for institutional governance because some of the stakeholders lack high level skills, appropriate experience and resources, and become overwhelmed by the enormity of the responsibilities which accompany their new roles".

In response thereto 29 respondents, translating into 56.86% agreed that their institutions are encountering problems in their transformed governing structures. 22 respondents, translating into 43.14% did not seem to encounter these difficulties in their governing structures. This is an indication that some institutions ought to engage their structures in order to improve the *status quo* and enhance their accountability role.

2(f)   It is also clear that the minority of institutions (9 respondents) are still being micro-managed by the Councils, who seemingly do not understand their role in the manner that it is stipulated in the spirit of the Education White Paper 3 : A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997), and the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and its Amendments of 1999, 2000 and 2001. The encouraging responses, i.e., 82% seem to have governing Councils that clearly understand their role. This is an indication of an element of quality in the main, although some institutions have problems.

2(g)   HEIs were asked to classify themselves in accordance with the institutional types that Cloete & Bunting (2000:56) invented, after extensive research during this era of transformation in South African higher education.   The selection of this classification (HDI-HAI by institutional type) is necessary because it is found to be current, relevant, and can still be located within the broader category of the HDIs and HAIs as indicated below.   The table below illustrates how participants view or classify their institutions:

Institutional Type	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Emerging-Stable institution (mainly HDIs)	17	32.69	17	32.69
Uncertain – Unstable institution (exclusively HDIs)	5	9.62	22	42.31
Entrepreneurial – Expanding institution (mainly HAIs)	23	44.23	45	86.54
Traditional – elite institution (exclusively HAIs)	5	9.62	50	96.15
Three (3) of the above	1	1.92	51	98.08
Four (4) of the above	1	1.92	52	100.00

It is noted from the table above that most HEIs regard themselves as entrepreneurial and expanding, whereas others perceive themselves as uncertain and unstable. Those that are emerging and stable seem to have a strong leadership core and a shared vision. One respondent claimed that their institution fulfilled all the first three institutional types, whereas the other also believes all characteristics are present at their institution.

The reason for the response was that the institution cannot be located within the HDI- HAI framework because of its historical outlook.

2(h)   In order to elaborate on these choices, HEIs were asked to give reasons and the following 82 frequency of responses were given:

Reason 1:   There is stability on campus – student unrests are minimized; growth in student numbers; there is financial viability; innovation as well as programme development.

Reason 2:   Decline in student numbers; poor leadership and management; and an unstable environment charaterised by student unrests/uprisings.

Reason 3:   Strong focus on strategic planning, expansion and entrepreneurship. The vision and mission is widely shared.

Reason 4:   The pending mergers of institutions bring about uncertainties in institutions.

Reason 5:   Some could not classify themselves as they believed that this was not a good classification of institutions since it could be all as a result of the mobility in higher education at this stage.

The table below illustrates the reasons given by HEIs according to their classifications:

	Frequency Percent Row % Column %	Classification by Institutional Type						
		Emerging Stable 1	Uncertain Unstable 2	Entrepr.- Expanding 3	Traditional Elite 4	Other		TOTAL
Reasons for choosing the category	1	10	0	14	5	0	0	29
		12.20	0.00	17.07	6.10	0.00	0.00	35.37
		34.48	0.00	48.28	17.24	0.00	0.00	
		43.48	0.00	37.84	50.00	0.00	0.00	
	2	3	4	0	1	1	0	9
		3.66	4.88	0.00	1.22	1.22	0.00	10.98
		33.33	44.44	0.00	11.11	11.11	0.00	
		13.04	50.00	0.00	10.10	50.00	0.00	
	3	9	0	21	3	0	0	33
		10.98	0.00	25.61	3.66	0.00	0.00	40.24
		27.27	0.00	63.64	9.09	0.00	0.00	
		39.13	0.00	56.76	30.00	0.00	0.00	
	4	0	4	2	0	0	1	4
		0.00	4.88	2.44	0.00	0.00	1.22	4.88
		0.00	57.14	28.57	0.00	0.00	25.00	
		0.00	50.00	5.41	0.00	0.00	50.00	
	5	1	0	0	1	1	1	4
		1.22	0.00	0.00	1.22	1.22	1.22	4.88
		25.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	
		4.35	0.00	0.00	10.00	50.00	50.00	
	TOTAL	23	8	37	10	2	2	82
		28.05	9.76	45.12	12.20	2.44	2.44	100

What is worth noting from this table is that 21 responses of the Entrepreneurial-expanding institutions gave reason number three, which signifies a strong strategic focus and "fitness for purpose". Similarly, these types of institutions (14) gave reason number one (stability, growth and financial viability). In the context of the research question, this is an indicator of a positive influence on the institutional quality assurance and management mechanisms.

The Uncertain-unstable HEIs gave reason number two and number four as reasons for their classification.

Some institutions were experiencing the decline in student numbers, unstable environments as well as poor leadership. Another reason was cited as the looming mergers of some institutions that seem to sow further instability in the affected institutions.

2(i)   When asked whether the transformed governance structures have brought about any improvements in the running of the institutions, 69% agreed and 30.7% (or 16 responses) said "no".

2(j)   The reasons for the "Yes" responses were 70.83% that attributed it to greater representivity, a stable environment, established credibility of governance structures and the competence with which the institutions are governed by the councils.

Another reason for the improvement brought about by Council was financial stability, a good strategic planning exercise as well as increased accountability at institutions.

2(k)   Where no improvement seemed to have taken place;

- 28.57% of the respondents attributed it to no strategic planning document to reposition/re-align the institution in line with the higher education reconfiguration exercise.

- 23.81% attributed it to Councils who do not understand their role and continue to micro-manage institutions and therefore violating the authority of the management structures.

- 47.62% of the responses attributed it to a solid and impressive history of good governance. The fact that there were newly transformed Councils did not matter at all.

It is worth noting in these preceding paragraphs that these responses represent a much smaller fraction, i.e. 21 responses in contrast to 48 responses that realised an improvement as a result of transformed governing Councils. This is another indication of the unevenness in the higher education system.

INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO QUALITY

3(a)   All 54 respondents confirmed that quality underpins the strategic plan of their institution. This is an indication of how institutions of higher learning were repositioning themselves in line with the developments in higher education. Some strategic planning documents were compared with this assertion, and were found to be in concurrence with the statement made that quality underpins their strategic planning. Some could not be verified owing to the non-availability of these documents.

3(b)   96.15% of the responses (50 in total) affirmed that their mission statements reflected the principles of quality assurance and quality promotion. All mission statements of institutions were read and analysed and found to be in agreement with the principles of academic excellence

and community service. These are public documents that were also accessed from institutional web sites in order to verify or check if they have not shifted their vision and mission in line with the developments in higher education.

3(c) Respondents were asked to state the key concepts that supported their choices on mission statements. The first concept that stood out was "academic excellence", the second concept was "community service", and the third was "strategic planning". The fourth was the category that gave any other reason that would not fit in any of the concepts above. The following table depicts the reasons given in alignment with the "Yes" responses.

Frequency % Row % Column %	Yes 1
Academic Excellence 1	27 45.00 100.00 45.76
Community Service 2	17 28.33 94.44 28.81
Frequency % Row % Column %	Yes 1
Strategic Planning 3	11 18.33 100.00 18.64
Any other 4	4 6.67 100.00 6.78
	59 98.33

3(d)   'Elements of good practice are a recent phenomenon in our institution', elicited 58.49% in agreement with the statement, thereby suggesting that the institutional approach to quality needs continuous improvement in line with the national QA imperatives: institutional self-evaluation exercises. Those that did not see QA as a novelty were 41.51% of the responses.

3(e)   Participants were asked if the notion of quality as "value for money" is superseded by quality as "fitness for purpose" in their institution, and 59.57% said "Yes", 36.17% said "No", and 4.26% said both notions are equally important.

3(f)   Upon giving reasons for their choices, some indicated that both are equally important (1.82%) and 61.82 % thought that indeed the notion of quality as "value for money" was superseded by quality as "fitness for purpose". Those that did not concur were 36.36% of the responses. These believe that "value for money" is the primary focus at their institutions, for reasons such as the need to recover from the financial strain the institutions had in the recent past.

3(g)   Another institutional approach to quality had to do with whether the focus was on "improvement " of quality in teaching and learning, and 88.89% agreed that their institutional focus was on improvement.

3(h)   The statement that the institutional governance structures' focus was on "accountability" and efficiency of operational systems as opposed to the improvement of teaching and learning and research, yielded 42% in favour of the approach and 52% said "No", meaning that institutional governance structures' focus was primarily on the improvement of teaching and learning and research.

SECTION B

ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT DIMENSIONS

4. **Quality Assurance Processes**

4(a) The participants were asked to consider the following structures of institutional governance and to indicate the <u>extent</u> to which QA was taking place in their institution and how <u>important</u> it was considered to be?

□ **Council:**

Out of a total of 49 respondents, 11 (22%) said that the extent to which QA was taking place at the level of Council, as well as the importance, were low (falling within the "Not at all" and "Partly"). In other words, they do not see Council involved in quality assurance, and they were less concerned about Council's involvement anyway.

Only 2 respondents see QA taking place at the level of Council and yet do not see why Council should be concerned about that, i.e. higher extent – low importance distribution (4%).

Those that see the lower extent (i.e. those that wish to see Council engaged in QA at that level), but do not see Council doing it, represented 8 (16%) of the responses

Contrary to these figures above, 28 (57%) respondents claim that the extent and importance at which QA is taking place at Council level in their institution was high, meaning either very important or extremely important

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In order to determine whether the differences in these responses were not per chance a chi-squared test was performed and the probability value of <0.0001 was found to be <0.05 (which is the norm) and therefore making these responses statistically significant. The chi-squared test of a contingency table is used to determine if there is enough evidence to infer that two quantitative variables are related and to infer that differences exist among two or more populations of qualitative variables (Keller & Warrack, 2000:551). Completing both objectives entails classifying items according to two different criteria and in this case it was the extent and importance.

    ❑ **Senate**

The majority of the responses, 41 out of 51 representing 80% saw a high extent – high importance distribution as far as Senate's involvement in QA practices. This is a confirmation that Senate as the primary governance structure charged with the responsibility of academic standards is still dominant in promoting the core business of institutions of higher learning.

Those that came across the lower extent and high importance as far as Senate goes were 7 (13.7%). This category of respondents would like to see more QA activities at Senate level because they believe that it is either very important or extremely important.

Seemingly 5.8% of the respondents were experiencing low extent - low importance of QA practices at Senate. The interpretation of this response is that senate is not perceived as crucial to the QA mechanisms at those institutions.

Similarly, the Fisher's Exact Test was performed to determine the statistical significance of these responses (Two-sided probability <0.0058). This was found to be a valid test.

□ **Institutional Forum (IF)**

Out of a total of 48 responses on this item, 16 (33%) claimed that QA was not taking place at IF level, and it was not important for it to be concerned about QA. Whereas 17% of the responses said it was important that the IF should be involved in QA but the extent was lower, 6% said it was not important for QA to take place at the level of IF and yet they see the extent at which it is happening either mostly or fully.

The majority of the responses (21) translating into 44% favoured that QA should take place and that it was indeed taking place at that level in their institutions.

The relatively higher responses of 33% and 44% above is an indication that this is a fairly new structure whose responsibilities need more and more clarification at operational level. This is attested to by the fact that 11% of the respondents did not know how to place the IF in terms of QA practices at their institution(s). The test was found to be statistically significant as it is the case in the above categories.

Institutions were asked if there were any levels at which QA was taking place at their institutions, and to what extent and degree of importance. The majority of the HEIs (70%) identified Faculty Boards with 94% for both the extent at which QA was taking place, and the degree of importance for QA. This is not an unfamiliar pattern given the fact that much of QA debates are about quality and academic standards. 6% saw their Faculty Boards partly involved with a much lower degree of importance.

Another level identified by 53% of the respondents was at academic departmental level with 89% affirming that QA is taking place with 91% degree of importance.

Other categories identified were administrative units without actually indicating the extent and importance to any significant extent. This category could be further explored in line with the principles of Total Quality Management in higher education (cf. Chapter 8 section 8.5.8).

5. Institutional Mission and Strategy

5(a) When asked to what extent the notion of quality as "fitness for purpose" is embedded in their mission statements, and how important it was to their institution, 85% indicated that it was to either 'most' or 'full' extent as well as very to extreme importance.

13.21% of the respondents indicated a lower extent and high importance, meaning that they could see why this notion (fitness for purpose) should be embedded in their mission statements, but it was actually not.

It is evident from the foregoing paragraphs that the reconfiguration of the higher education system necessitates the revision and/or improvement of institutional mission statements, and most institutions seemed to concur with the national policy imperatives in this regard.

5(b) The emphasis of quality as "value of money" elicited 65% high extent – high importance (i.e 34 out of 52 responses) in that combination. The majority of respondents claimed that "value for money" is considered to be extremely important.

A further 25% (13) respondents believed that the extent and importance to which quality as "value for money" is emphasized at their institution, was much lower (not at all/some what) thereby suggesting that they do not see it and there is no need to focus on value for money.

5(c) Funding in higher education is currently a problem that requires "doing more with less", and when institutions were asked how extensive the funding of QA and its mechanisms was at their institutions, and how important it was considered to be, 11% indicated that there was no separate funding for QA at their institutions, and it was not considered to be an issue (of importance). An emerging concern was that 31% felt that QA ought to be adequately funded and that it was actually not funded properly at their institutions.

Out of 54 responses 29 (54%) said that QA was extensively funded at their institutions and it was considered to be mostly/extremely important as part of their institutional mission and strategy. 85% felt that it was necessary for QA to be funded adequately. This could be the subject for further research (cf. Chapter 8, section 8.5.9) in line with the HEQC mandate in this country which is outlined in its Founding Document in Chapter 2.

5(d) HEIs were asked to what extent were perceptions on academic standards affecting their student intake and how important this was to their strategic focus?
- 6% said perceptions on academic standards were not affecting them, and it did not quite matter to them.
- Another 6% said perceptions on academic standards were to a larger extent affecting their student intake, but it was not considered that important.
- 20 respondents out of 53 (38%) said the extent to which perceptions on academic standards affected their student intake was not at all/partly (low) an issue, and yet it was very/extremely important for their strategic focus.
- 51% reported high extent – high importance, meaning that it was necessary for their institutions to promote positive perceptions on

academic standards that would yield higher enrolments as part of their strategic planning endeavors.

6. **Efficiency and Effectiveness**

6(a) The intensifying stakeholder scrutiny of governance policies and practices, education and training processes and outcomes, all are leading towards the implementation of formal QA arrangements within higher education institutions.

HEIs were asked to respond to this statement by indicating the extent to which this was applicable to their institution, and what importance was attached to the stakeholder input. 87% overwhelmingly responded that it was very/extremely important to engage stakeholders for purposes of accountability. A smaller fraction (9.4%) felt that accountability and stakeholder involvement was taking place and it was not important at all since systems of good governance are in place.

6(b) HEIs were asked whether the shrinking resources from the state had a bearing on the core business (teaching and learning, research and community service) in the following categories:

❑ Programme Offerings: 63% of the respondents indicated that the extent to which the shrinking resources and the call to "do more with less" was impacting on the core business was high. The degree of importance was also high implying that if there is a continued call "to do more with less" the quality of the academic programmes may be adversely affected.

Another 28% of the respondents said the extent to which this was happening appeared much lower than the degree of importance (which is high).

❑ Information Technology: 15 out of 54 respondents (25%) said that the extent to which the shrinking resources, was affecting IT was lower and the importance much higher.   This scenario suggests that it is absolutely important that IT should support the functions of teaching and learning, research and community service, but respondents see it happening to a lesser extent (either not at all or partly).

65% of the respondents said the extent and importance to which the shrinking resources were affecting teaching and learning was very high. This is a situation that is calling for attention by way of quality enhancement.

❑ Facilities (e.g. Laboratory space). A similar situation with IT above appeared in this area. There is a high extent and high importance (67%) – i.e. the shrinking resources and the call to "do more with less" are affecting the core functions of teaching and learning, research and community service. 26% reported low extent and high importance. This is an area that is viewed as extremely important as a means towards the attainment of good academic standards.

❑ Management Information Systems: For purposes of efficiency and effectiveness 67% regarded the MIS reporting as both important and extensive toward the support of teaching and learning, research and community service.

6(c)   Participants were also asked to mention other areas and indicate the extent and importance of them in relation to how the shrinking of resources could affect the core business of institutions of higher learning. The following areas were mentioned by a relatively small number of respondents who in some instances were not indicating the extent and degree of importance:

- Research (9) 36%
- Human Resources (8) 32%
  - retaining qualified/quality staff
  - staff salaries and benefits
- Student Support Services (6) 24%
  - student accommodation
  - sports facilities
- Protection Services (2) 8%

7.   International Perspectives on Quality

7(a)   Asked whether the proliferation of international higher education providers and competition among institutions of higher learning was a threat to quality outcomes, 13 respondents out of 54 said the extent to which this phenomenon was impacting on the growth of their institution was low and it was not considered important at all to be a threat.

However, 31% of the respondents said that the extent at which this proliferation of private providers was impacting on their growth was either "partly" or "not at all" but it was considered very important that it may affect their growth as an institution.

Likewise, 23 respondents (43%) claimed that the extent to which it was affecting them was high and the importance was also high.   This claim was found to be statistically significant on application of the Chi-squared test as well as the Fisher's Exact Test.   It appeared that 74% of the respondents consider this proliferation and competition among institutions as a real threat to their growth.

7(b)   Asked whether developing principles of good practice and recognition of quality in international education and training was an essential ingredient

of their institutional strategic plan, an overwhelming response (87%), said that the extent was high as well as the importance. This is evidenced by the fact that education does not seem to have any boundaries since a range of networks and the demands of globalisation have resulted in education without frontiers as outlined in Chapter 4.

8.   Total Quality Management

8(a)   HEIs were asked to what extent their institutional governance structures were applying the principles of TQM and how important it was for higher education in general? A resounding 72% said the extent at which TQM was applicable in the institutional governance was high and the importance for higher education in general was also high. A further 20% said that the extent at their institution was lower but felt that it was very/extremely important for higher education in general.

The TQM/CQI mania in higher education was pioneered by a small number of HEIs in the 1980's, but the formal introduction to a larger national audience in the US came about a decade later in an article "TQM Reaches the Academy" by Fred Marchese (1991:3). So much quality improvement seems to be occurring in the education sector, but it is so difficult to observe, decipher, and explain (Axland, 1992:41). Similarly, the Chronicle of Higher Edcuation proclaimed "TQM: Colleges Embrace the Concept of Total Quality Management" and went on to assert, "Across the country, colleges and universities are reporting success with the technique" (Mangan, 1992: A25). TQM was promoted as a way of restoring the pillars of higher education and overcoming the threat that competition from foreign institutions and the corporate sector would reduce "market share" (Bemowski, 1991: 37).

The TQM discussion appears extensively in the theoretical framework in Chapter 3 (section 3.4), and it is one of the quality management systems whose principles are applicable in higher education.

SECTION C

INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS THAT INFLUENCE THE QUALITY PERSPECTIVES

Institutions were asked to reflect whether the following variables <u>inhibit</u> or <u>promote</u> the implementation of best practice principles at their institution, and then indicate to what extent this occurs (according to the scale: "1 = greatly inhibits; 2 = partly inhibits; 3 = partly promotes; 4 = greatly promotes")

9.   Contextual Variables:

9.1   <u>Internal image of the institution</u>:   35% of the HEIs said that the internal image of their institution was inhibiting and therefore the implementation of best practice was being frustrated to some extent. Conversely 65% of all respondents said their internal images promote best practice in their institutions.

    ❑ Looking at this from a different angle of the classifications of institutions as in paragraph 2(g) above, 12% of the emerging-stable HEIs felt that they were greatly inhibited by their internal images, 47% of them felt "partly inhibited" and 29% and 12% felt partly promoted and greatly promoted by their internal image respectively. This classification comprises mainly the HDIs that are emerging from unstable environments, and also some HAIs that have repositioned themselves in line with the transformation agenda.

❑ The Uncertain-unstable HEI's felt greatly and partly inhibited with no indication of promotability of good practice. This is attributed to reasons mentioned earlier such as the pending mergers of institutions which makes a number of people in these institutions uncertain about their future and careers. Another reason is attributed to the decline in student numbers, poor leadership of the institution, as well as unstable environments characterised by student unrests and low morale of staff.

❑ This variable is characerises mainly by HDIs, and to a very limited extent the merging institutions.

❑ The entrepreneurial-expanding HEI's (HAIs) largely felt that their internal image is boosting the implementation of best practice, and this was accounted for by 87% of the responses in this classification. This outcome correlates with reasons such as the growth in student numbers, institutional stability, financial viability, as well as a strong strategic focus. Only 13% of these institutional types felt partly inhibited by their internal images.

❑ The traditional-elite HAIs reported no inhibition of their internal image and recorded only the internal image that promoted best practice principles in their institutions.

9.2 External image of the institution: The majority of respondents (67%) said that the external image of their institution was promoting the implementation of best practice principles, whereas 33% felt that their external image was inhibiting to some extent. This overall frequency is for all institutions without their classification by type.

❑ The classification of HEIs by type revealed that 59% of the emerging-stable institutions felt inhibited by their external environment/image

(emerging from the 'dark' past and are geared towards stable institutional climates), whereas 41% felt comfortable that their external image is promoting the principles of best practice in their institution.

❑ Uncertain-Unstable HEIs: 60% of them felt that the external environment/image is inhibiting and 40% of them (HAIs) felt it partly promotes the implementation of best practice in their institutions. These are institutions that are affected by external forces such as the National Plan for Higher Education, as well as institutions who are recovering from collapsed governance structures and negative publicity.

❑ 22% of the Entrepreneurial-expanding HEIs reported that they were partly inhibited by their external image whereas 78% felt their image is positive externally and they are seen to be implementing quality programmes and appropriate mission statements.

❑ Traditional-elite HEIs rely on their past external image and reported 100% promotability of best practice in their institution. They seemed not to have any inhibitions externally that affected their growth and development.

9.3 The Institutions' relations with the Department of Education:
The overall impression provided by all HEIs is that 24% do not seem to be having good relations with the Department of Education, 64% seem to have sound relations that promote best practice, and 2% of the respondents did not seem to care about that. They did not see this item as applicable to their institution.

❑ A further classification by institutional type show that Emerging-stable HEIs that are inhibited by the relations with the Department of

education are 41%. Those that feel that their relations are promoting and influencing quality perspectives were 59% of the responses.

❑ 80% of the Uncertain-unstable HEIs felt that their relations with the Department of Education partly promotes the implementation of best practice in their institutions.

❑ The category of Entrepreneurial-expanding HEIs overwhelmingly (91%) view their relations with the Department of Education as promoting quality perspectives in their institutions.

❑ Whereas 60% of the Traditional-elite HEIs felt that their relations with the Department of Education was partly inhibiting the implementation of best practice, another 20% felt it was partly promoted and another 20% felt it was greatly promoted. This could be interpreted as perceptions of resistance to the transformation on the one hand, and the need to maintain and preserve a particular culture of the institution on the other.

9.4 The Historical Classification of the Institution:

An overall 65% of institutions of higher learning reported that their historical classification either partly or greatly inhibit their implementation of quality perspectives at their institutions. A further 15% said their historical background partly promotes the implementation of best practice, and another 17% reported that their classification greatly promotes their quality focus. It was also noted that this factor was not an issue for 2% of the responses since their institutions cannot be classified in this manner. A few respondents elected not to respond to this item.

The following table illustrates the responses by institutional classification or type and the extent of inhibition or promotability of this variable:

Historical Classification of Institutions by Type:

	Emerging-Stable	Uncertain-Unstable	Entrepreneurial-Expanding	Traditional-Elite	Other
Greatly Inhibits	35%	20%	4%	0%	0%
Partly Inhibits	41%	60%	55%	25%	0%
Partly Promotes	24%	20%	14%	0%	0%
Greatly Promotes	0%	0%	27%	75%	0%

This data demonstrates the unevenness of higher education institutions as indicated in the problem statement in Chapter 1. Some institutions are greatly inhibited by their historical past and thus feel that the implementation of QA mechanisms requires additional effort to level the playing field.

The table above clearly demonstrates that institutions are inhibited by their historical past. The Uncertain-Unstable, Entrepreneurial-Expanding and Emerging-Stable record the highest percentages in this category. This phenomenon is captured in Chapter 1 where an indication is made that the higher education legislation and framework necessitates the establishment of transformed governing structures and yet the problem or challenge is how these will influence on the quality assurance mechanisms of institutions. Part of the research question is addressed by this distribution above which seem to suggest that the historical classification of institutions either partly or greatly inhibits the implementation of best practice at their institutions.

Similarly the traditional-elite institutions do not seem to have this problem which is to some extent attributed to governance issues. 75% of these

institutions felt that their historical classification greatly promoted their implementation of QA mechanisms.

The distribution in the table above attests to the unevenness of the higher education institutions in terms of the implementation of the quality assurance and quality management systems in South Africa.

9.5   The Financial Viability of the Institution:
The table below gives a picture of how institutional finances according to their classification impact on the implementation of best practice:

	Emerging-Stable	Uncertain-Unstable	Entrepreneurial-Expanding	Traditional-Elite	Other
Greatly Inhibits	41%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Partly Inhibits	24%	40%	26%	0%	100%
Partly Promotes	35%	20%	22%	20%	0%
Greatly Promotes	0%	0%	52%	80%	0%

This is yet another picture that demonstrates the unevenness of institutions in terms of financial resources geared towards the implementation of good practice.   Entrepreneurial-expanding and Traditional-elite institutions seem to be well resourced with 74% and 100% respectively, whereas more indigent institutions (HDIs) seem to be greatly or partly inhibited by this factor.

This scenario poses further challenges for the higher education institutions especially with regard to the funding of QA mechanisms. This correlates with a question on how extensive QA was funded and how important it

was to their institutions. Some institutions felt that QA did not require a large budget allocation, others felt that it was not funded adequately and others felt that it was extensively funded at their institutions as illustrated by the table above.

The overall percentage frequency still demonstrates that 42% of the HEIs without any classification felt that the financial viability of their institutions were inhibiting the implementation of QA mechanisms.

National Policy Imperatives

9.6   The Legislative requirements of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997:
The majority of HEIs (86%) said that this factor partly or greatly promoted the principles of quality at their institutions. This general impression is also supported by institutions according to their classifications. This is an indication that the majority of HEIs consider the legislative requirements positively. A smaller group of respondents (14%) still feel that the requirements are inhibiting to some extent.

9.7   Higher Education Policy Implementation:
Policies that are implemented seem to have the support of HEIs to a very large extent. Institutions by their classification are in agreement with policies that are introduced by the Department of Education. These include the Three-Year Rolling Plans, National Plan for Higher Education, Programme and Qualification Mixes, etc. However, 40% of the Traditional-elite institutions (HAIs) consider the implementation of best practices inhibiting – this is the largest percentage contrasted with 100% of the Uncertain-unstable institutions who reported partial promotion of higher education policies. This means that HDIs consider the higher education policies to be promoting good practice in their institutions,

whereas the traditional-elite HAIs consider these policies inhibiting in their environment.

9.8   <u>HEQCs Approach to Quality Assurance</u>:

Only 2% of the responses are not sure whether the HEQC's approach inhibits or promotes the implementation of best practice in their institutions. The reason for this is cited as "too early to judge/comment" since the HEQC has just been launched in May of 2001. This was an insignificant number in comparison to the 98% that support the approach of the HEQC towards the institutional implementation of best practice.

It has been indicated in Chapter 2, that the HEQC's developmental focus on QA is a predominant one with "Fitness for Purpose", "Value for Money" and Quality as "Transformation" as the primary foci or approaches. This indication seems not only to support the legal framework and the principles of the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997), but also the acceptance by HEIs of the mandate given to the HEQC irrespective of the lingering binary division in higher education in this country.

9.9   <u>National Plan for Higher Education (2001)</u>:

The looming uncertainties in higher education elicited the following responses as to whether the NPHE inhibits or promotes the implementation of best practices in institutions of higher learning:

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	Partly Inhibits	Partly/Greatly Promotes
Emerging-stable HEIs	18%	82%
Unstable-Uncertain HEIs	40%	60% (partly only)
Entrepreneurial-Expanding HEIs	13%	87%
Traditional-Elite HEIs	40%	60%
Other	100%	-

The scenario presented here suggests that HEIs are mainly in support of the NPHE in spite of the uncertainties reigning with the pending report of the Ministerial National Working Group in December 2001, and the subsequent advise to the Minister by the Council on Higher Education possibly by February 2001. Notably, Uncertain-unstable and Traditional-elite HEIs show a pattern that casts some doubt on the implementation of the QA principles. There is clearly some skepticism as far as these institutions see the National Plan for Higher Education, a development that remains to be seen and be judged through the test of time.

9.10 SAQA's requirements through the NQF:

There is yet an indication by HEIs that the SAQA principles are supported (62%) as far as the implementation of QA mechanisms go. This pattern is strongly supported by Emerging-stable, Uncertain-unstable as well as Entrepreneurial-expanding HEIs ranging between 76% and 80%. However, 60% of the Traditional-elite HEIs consider the SAQA requirements through the National Qualifications Framework as inhibiting good practice.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

9.11 The Funding Formula for HEIs appears to be worrisome to most institutions. Perhaps it is appropriate to mention that it is under revision at this stage as outlined in the NPHE. Nevertheless, the existing Funding Formula seems to generally inhibit the implementation of best practice as the following data shows:
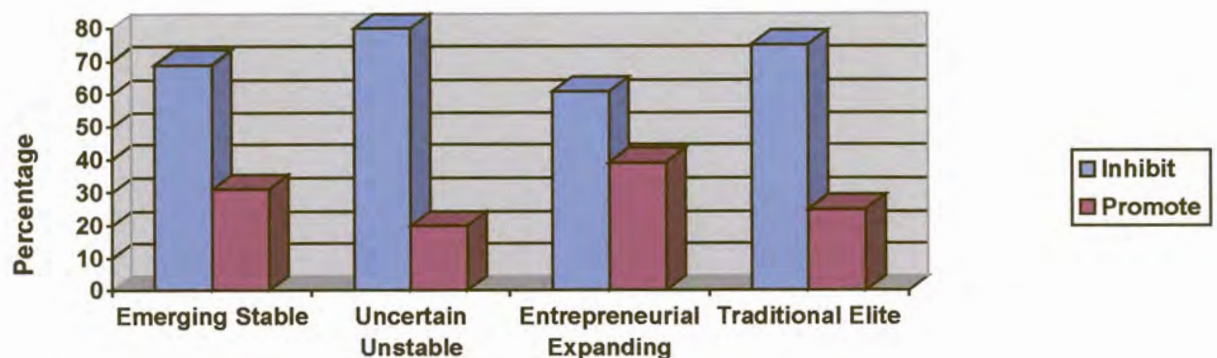
This is a serious factor for the implementation of a successful quality assurance strategy. Clearly, governance structures are inhibited by economic considerations in order to influence QA mechanisms in their institutions.

9.12 <u>Funding of Research in Higher Education</u> seemed to favour certain institutions over others as depicted by the following data:

  □ 47% of the Emerging-stable HEIs are inhibited by this factor, 53% of them said that the funding of research promotes the implementation of QA mechanisms.

  □ 60% of Uncertain-unstable HEIs felt inhibited whilst 40% felt partly promoted.

  □ 52% of the Entrepreneurial-expanding HEIs felt that the funding of research was inhibiting the implementation of QA whilst 48% felt

differently. This factor relates to the technikon sector of the HAIs in that research has not been adequately funded by the government over a period of time due to their focus on vocational subjects.

❑ 40% of the Traditional-elite HEIs felt inhibited whilst 60% felt partly promoted. This attests to a much higher research output associated with HAIs in relation to HDIs.

This scenario attests to the fact that universities are funded for research under the current subsidy formula whereas technikons are not. Some relied on private/donor funding and contract research to promote the implementation of good practice in their institutions.

9.13 The funding of QA as a new initiative seemed to be partly given attention by Uncertain-unstable as well as Traditional-elite HEIs with each reporting 80% for the funding of QA and its mechanisms. Generally, HEIs said that there was partial promotion of the implementation of the elements of good practice. Only Emerging-stable HEIs with 60% appeared to be inhibited to a greater extent by the funding of QA as a new initiative in their institutions.

9.14 The fiduciary responsibilities of governing Councils appeared to overwhelmingly (86%), promote the implementation of best practice principles in most HEIs even by their classification. This is an indication that most governing Councils in higher education take their trusteeship responsibilities seriously. This fact is supported by the earlier assertion that "value for money" is considered quite important by the majority of councils in paragraph 5(b) above.

INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

9.15   The extent of <u>trust among internal stakeholders</u> was outlined as follows:

	Emerging-Stable	Uncertain-Stable	Entrepreneurial-Expanding	Traditional-Elite
Greatly Inhibits	13%	80%	-	-
Partly Inhibits	44%	20%	9%	20%
Partly Promotes	37%	-	23%	20%
Greatly Promotes	6%	-	68%	60%

This distribution shows that Uncertain-unstable HEIs as well as the Emerging-stable institutions (who are largely HDIs) have a serious problem in respect of the level of trust in their institutions. Conversely, the Entrepreneurial-expanding and Traditional-elite HEIs (HAIs) seemed to enjoy a high level of trust that promoted the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms in their institutions. This development enables the governance structures to influence QA positively, and thus contribute towards a long term impact on the higher education system in South Africa. The HDI scenario shows the perpetuation of the apartheid practices of lack of trust and suspicion among stakeholders. This development has an adverse effect on the implementation of good practice in historically disadvantaged institutions.

9.16   <u>The balance between academic and administrative responsibilities to QA</u> showed a pattern among Uncertain-unstable institutions not having a balance between these dimensions. 80% of these responses indicate an institutional environment that inhibits the implementation of best practice. This is yet again an indicator that these institutions are characterised by conflict amongst different governance structures and a lack of stable authority often accompanied by a loss of students and good staff (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:56-57). The Emerging-stable HEIs recorded 62% responses that either partially or greatly promoted the implementation of

best practice principles as far as the balance between academic and administrative responsibilities went.

As it seemed to be the pattern with Entrepreneurial-expanding, and Traditional-elite HEIs, there was 64% and 100% respectively that affirmed that there was a balance between academic and administrative responsibilities that promoted good practice in their institutions.

9.17 Most institutions (86%) reported that the <u>academic stability</u> of their institutions were promoting the implementation of QA. This was also supported by the Uncertain-unstable HEIs who, together with the Emerging-stable HEIs, seemed to have elements of inhibition above 20%. This is also an indication that there is an improvement driven by governance structures in their practices that are geared toward QA.

9.18 <u>Commitment to QA at all levels:</u>
The general picture provided is that there is universal commitment toward Quality Assurance at all levels with Emerging-stable and Uncertain-Unstable HEIs (HDIs) recording between 60% - 75% in this factor. There are still indications that in some institutions there is limited commitment to the implementation of QA.

10. Respondents were asked to contribute more influences that inhibit or promote the implementation of an effective QA system in their institution and the following category of responses were given:

Inhibiting Influences	Promoting Influences
❏ Organisational Structure	❏ A tradition of quality performance
❏ Impending Merger with another institution	❏ Strong Management/Commitment
❏ Lack of accountability	❏ Staff Commitment/Morale
❏ Integration of Academic & Support Centres	❏ Research Output
	❏ Experiential Learning
❏ Retrenchments	❏ Management Responsibility
❏ "Mark time" activities from students	❏ Student Expectations
❏ Uneven academic quality of staff	❏ International Co-operation
❏ Inter- institutional collaborations	❏ External examiners
❏ Moving from Departmental to School Structure	❏ Expert staff in higher education
	❏ Explicit ideal to become a leading institution
❏ Poor teaching practices	❏ Management Support
❏ Old staff clinging to old practices	
❏ Campus hostilities	
❏ Academic Support	
❏ Binary System	
❏ Indecisive management	
❏ Low salaries	
❏ Internal lack of resources	
❏ Lack of understanding and expertise	
❏ Financial constraints	
❏ Attitude/Understanding of QA	
❏ Policies & Dynamics of QA	
❏ General Apathy	
❏ Capacity: Human and Finances	
❏ Staff expertise	

This list of influences that either inhibit or promote QA are some of the dynamics that play themselves out at institutions of higher learning. These are factors that HEIs can take into consideration in their endeavour to enhance institutional climates conducive to quality promotion. It should be noted that the inhibiting factors outlined above are largely ascribed to the environment at HDIs, whereas

the promotion factors are ascribed to HAIs in the main. This is another pattern that is showing the unevenness in the system at a deeper level.

6.3 CONCLUSION

The analysis of this questionnaire took into account the legal requirements and institutional governance in a transformational context, and further probed the institutional responses as they relate to the research question. The majority of the HEIs are responsive to the legal requirements, institutional approaches that fall within the broader national goals, and the governance structures seem to support good practice in varying degrees according to the classification of institutions. Clear patterns of the differences in HAI and HDIs are outlined and analysed to include a further distribution of institutional types.

The dimensions of accountability and improvement are reflected in institutional missions and strategies, QA mechanisms, international best practice perspectives, and the quality management systems such as TQM that enable institutions to look at quality holistically.

The mobility in higher education brings about dynamics that influence the quality perspectives. Internal and external images of institutions are either inhibiting or promoting good practice, and that goes with many other variables like finances, national policies, stability of institutions, etc. All these influences serve as a template from which the governance structures can develop systems that will improve the quality management of HDIs and HAIs in the future.

CHAPTER 7

CHAPTER 7

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

7.1   INTRODUCTION

As a follow-up to the questionnaire responses, interviews were arranged with a selected group of HEIs to broaden the understanding of the researcher on the issues raised by the questionnaire responses towards the research question, 'How do the transformed institutional structures influence quality assurance mechanisms in South African higher education?'.   This chapter outlines the discussions that ensued along the framework provided by the researcher in Appendix C, and attempts to identify clear trends that reinforce or conflict with the data presented in Chapter 6.

Firstly, a comprehensive background to the research project was provided in order to establish a contextual framework of the study and how the institution selected fit into the broader classification of HAIs and HDIs.   A common understanding of the concepts 'transformation', 'institutional governance structures' and 'quality assurance and promotion' will be elaborated on in this chapter as was discussed in the interviews.

Secondly, this chapter examines the interview responses and analyses them in the broad categories of governance for council, senate, the quality focus of the institution, and how international best practice impacts on quality in HEIs. Council's responsibilities such as accountability, fiduciary duties, policy-making,

strategic planning and allocation of resources will be discussed in detail and matched with the same variables in Chapter 6.

Thirdly, senate's responsibilities in terms of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and institutional statutes within the context of quality assurance is also discussed to reflect on the institutional perspective. In this context, the issue of academic standards (see Chapter 2 section 3.3.1), the developmental approach to quality and the notion of "value for money" for students and other customers will be explored further. The international competitiveness of academic programmes is discussed within the broader framework of internationalisation and globalisation in higher education.

Fourthly, the institutional focus on quality within the notions that are largely applicable in higher education (cf. Interview Schedule in Appendix C) were discussed with participants. The quality focus permeates through all the structures in the discussions analysed in this chapter. Finally, the Institutional Forum is also discussed within the quality perspective and how HEI representatives view its role. In each of the institutional structures, their composition, functions and contribution to quality promotion, quality management and quality assurance is responded to in the words of the interviewees as far as possible.

7.2 COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF CONCEPTS

It was necessary to establish a common understanding of the concepts as outlined in Chapter 1. The following key concepts that are used in the South African higher education fraternity are discussed:

7.2.1 TRANSFORMATION

'Transformation' referred to the changes that are taking place in higher education since the National Council on Higher Education report, the Education White Paper as well as the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and its subsequent Amendments of 1999, 2000 and 2001. This common understanding includes the reconfiguration exercise since the submission of 3-Year Rolling Plans, the National Policy Priorities as well as the 'Shape and Size' report that culminated into the present-day National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE). It is also based on the policy documents rather than other discourses on transformation.

7.2.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROMOTION

'Quality assurance and Promotion' referred to the principles outlined in the Education White Paper 3 on quality assurance as enunciated in Chapter 2 and the goals and approaches of the HEQC on quality as alluded to in this study. It was also indicated that the concept of quality promotion required an added effort since it is a relatively fresh concept in higher education circles as contrasted to the health and industrial models since the World War II (see Chapter 3 section 3.2 and 3.3). This is an activity that is vigorously addressed by the HEQC in order to build confidence on academic standards in this country.

Particular emphasis is placed on the structural arrangements that support quality in the institution. A point is further made that quality cuts across all operational levels of an institution. Participants were, for that reason asked to share their experiences of good practice during the period after the transformation legislation was passed; particularly since the governance structures had been refashioned (transformed) to be in alignment with the stipulations of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997.

7.2.3 INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

The structures discussed are the governing council, senate and the institutional forum as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. The aim is to determine the extent to which these structures influence QA in their institutions. This influence is intended to make an impact on the higher education transformation agenda in the future.

7.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE INTERVIEWS

A broad question '*What role has the transformed institutional structures played towards the promotion and assurance of quality at your institution?*' was asked to the participants. This question is located within the research question, and each of the component parts discussed below related to the questionnaire and the theme of this study.

7.3.1 GOVERNANCE AT THE LEVEL OF COUNCIL

7.3.1.1 ACCOUNTABILITY

Institutional responses to the broad question outlined above gave an indication that the authority of councils as the highest governing body was generally accepted in both historically advantaged and disadvantaged institutions. These responses are matched with Chapter 6, Section B 4 (a) in order to identify the data that either reinforce or conflict the questionnaire data.

In the words of one respondent, "*council is established in terms of the law, and it should see to it that the institution is managed according to the strategic plan*", and another contended

"council has put adequate measures to ensure that there is quality, and a case in point was the establishment of more focused committees with far more accountability. Our case in point is the Audit Committee which wasn't there prior to the new management coming in, and the appointment of internal auditors, I think that is extremely important as well".

Although Councils were charged with the governance of the institutions,

"it was not desirable that they should embroil themselves in the day-to-day running of the institution, rather they could ensure that they influence the daily activities by crafting policies that were covering broad areas/scope of their responsibilities",

This was another response that clarified the institutional role of council as recorded in the discussions. This view was held by both HAIs and HDIs, although in some institutions there appears to be misunderstandings about the role of council and its duties that relate to quality systems. In order to avoid, and in other instances to circumvent the conflict of interests, two institutions organised workshops ("bosberaad" which is a commonly used concept in higher education circles in South Africa) between the Councils of their institutions and their managements. In some institutions this was necessitated by *"councils who seemed to take their tasks very seriously to an extent that their enthusiasm was violating the authority of management to run the institutions on a day-to-day-basis".* In some of these institutions agreement was reached that there should be good policies in place, and management to be held accountable to Council in the implementation of those policies. Not all these policies were in place, according to some respondents, but an effort was made to have them all approved by Council so that the work of some of those HEIs could be simplified. Section A 2 (e) of the questionnaire concurs with this assertion that institutional governance structures are facing difficulties in role clarification.

One historically advantaged institution defined their approach to institutional governance as *"to achieve the highest levels of institutional efficiency and effectiveness through sound management practices which give due consideration to the views of all stakeholders."* (See Chapter 6, Section 6(a)).

As far as the accountability role of Council interfaces with quality, a group of senior administrators felt that people who should drive quality at an institution are management. One HDI indicated *"... if quality is in place that will show in the way we deal with the public and the way we go about our work; and I frequently say quality is not an accident, it is the result of a deliberate action."* One HDI felt that quality should be the priority of top management and that they should be held accountable for that activity. Succinctly put, they believe that once policies are in place there ought to be instruments to measure it. This would give an indication of the areas that needed improvement. This is an attempt to ensure that quality systems are put in place in those institutions where they are lacking, and also this confirms the unevenness that is in the system as outlined in Chapter 6, Section B 4 (a). Where some HEIs (22%) do not see Council's involvement in QA, and don't believe its necessary, others (57%) believe in what they see their Councils do towards quality enhancement in their institutions.

Another dimension mentioned was that some of the personalities (or persons) in Council tended to be *"populist and political in their approach to Council business".* This issue seems to affect the 'quality of the decision making' of council, and had a negative effect one the institution since top management was suspended for nine months and was reinstated as a result of no evidence provided. A comparison (see Section A 2 (e) & (f)), in one instance was made to the out-gone (transformed) council and the newly constituted council that seems to have its eye on the bigger picture. In this way,

> *"they succeeded in persuading management to conduct its business differently and improve on their way of doing things, e.g. Council agendas*

and supporting documentation was supposed to be thoroughly prepared well in advance to allow council members to apply their minds on the items raised, and not submit documents in the process of the meetings and expect Council to rubberstamp management decisions".

One traditional-elite and another entrepreneurial- expanding HAI indicated that *"Council had nothing to do with quality issues. It is primarily the responsibility of senate".* Council in these entrepreneurial-expanding and traditional-elite institutions do not involve themselves in the micro-management of the institution. Rather, they seem to have the *"confidence in their top structures"* that they were doing the right thing. Additionally, *"councils expected annual reports that gave an indication of successes and failures and areas that required improvement".*

This was an indication of how seriously they were taking their accountability mandate in the context of their fiduciary responsibilities regardless of their transformed nature. In this instance councils are making an indirect impact in the QA mechanisms put in place by mandating their responsibilities.

Where the composition of council had increased to include other substantive stakeholders, in an entrepreneurial-expanding HAI various council members seemed to have different expectations in that *"the constituency driven appointees of council needed to go back to their constituencies and seek approval for certain issues discussed at Council".* This appeared to be in contravention with the letter and spirit of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997: 27(7)(b) which stipulates that

"the members of a Council must participate in the deliberations of the Council, in the best interests of the public higher education institution concerned"

This stipulation negates sectoral interests that usually manifest themselves in these deliberations. Similarly, this implies that even the Ministerial appointees on governing Councils may not go back to the Ministry to seek further mandates based on the deliberations on Councils or any of its committees.

Some of these institutions thought it was imperative that Council should *"function as a unit, and not fragmented by constituencies"*. The larger sizes of councils had necessitated its dependence more on Council Committees to do the work,

> *"For instance, the Executive Committee of Council's responsibilities had increased and it expected committees such as the Human Resources, Facilities, Property, Finance and the Audit Committees of Council to take their responsibilities seriously in order to enhance quality at the institution. The Audit Committee of Council no longer regarded itself as just a financial audit committee, but also looked at institutional audit in its entirety, e.g. student intake audit, environmental audit (scanning), governance audit (how effectively things worked and what they did, and calculating indices of effectiveness and efficiency)".*

What appears to be the institutional approach in the statement above concurs with the principle of total quality in the institution as elaborated on in Chapter 3 on TQM and the case study of Babson College in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.3 and Chapter 6 section B 8 (a).

The issue of accountability at Council seems to hinge on both the external environment as well as the internal by way of being responsive to the needs of the clients, and in this case, mainly students. In conclusion, HEIs mainly understand the role of council in a transformational context. One stable institution (HAI) does not see council busying itself with quality. Although there appears to be stability at governance that has a positive impact on quality within that

institution, the responses from unstable institutions prove the contrary as indicated in Chapter 6 Section C, 9.4.

7.3.1.2   FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL

The requirements and stipulations of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997:41 (1)(2)(3) expect Councils of HEIs to maintain good practice with regard to the utilization of the public finances and the keeping of good and reliable records. The fiduciary duties of institutions of higher learning was attested to by the fact that most *"Councils expected well researched proposals and reliable records to be put before council before it could apply its mind on them"*. This ensured that the best interests of the institution were taken into account (see Chapter 6 Section C 9.14 where 86% of HEIs supported the view). This is an element of quality that was indicated by an HDI that was reportedly succeeding in building a sound relationship within its structures.

An HAI that seems well established reported that *"toward the fulfilment of its trusteeship role, councils at this institutions treats their management with due diligence and skill"*. This aspect relates to quality in a manner that would likely increase the output of managers especially when they are acknowledged 'for a job well done'. This appears to have increased the morale of management in a way that seems to contribute towards the stability of the institution.

Some of the responsibilities that fall squarely within the approval powers of Council such as budget allocations were delegated to council committees and management. This was an indication of the level of trust that was shown by council to its committees and top structures of management. However, *"councils have ensured that internal as well as external audits were being performed in order for quality systems to be kept in place"*. *These audit reports are expected to serve at council meetings for scrutiny and approval.*

There is also an indication that certain councils do not accept deficit budgets put before them. They insist that management should get it right before ill-informed decisions were taken. This principle concurs with Crosby's absolute 'it is always cheaper to do it right first time' (Chapter 3 Section 3.2.1). Similarly, Chapter 6 (Section C, 9.14) indicated that 86% of governing councils took their fiduciary duties seriously to an extent that quality is implied and ensured as far as possible. The HDI impressions noted in Chapter 6 section 9.15 that trust is an inhibiting factor, which is point that is in conflict with the interview data.

The long list of 'inhibiting influences' on QA (Chapter 6, Section C10) relate much to the fiduciary responsibilities of Councils, and it is from these that institutions can conduct surveys that would enable the governing councils to address some of the issues they may not be aware of that can promote quality in their institutions.

7.3.1.3   POLICY-MAKING

Institutions that were interviewed overwhelmingly, across all categories regarded their councils as responsible for policy formation/formulation, policy adoption and policy implementation. Although the latter was delegated to management, it was expected of management to report accurately to council on the implementation of policies, e.g. staff policies, student admissions policies, academic programme policies, etc. This is documented in some of the institutions' policy statements that were gleaned by the researcher.

An indication was made in one interview that

> *"if you look at governance to a large extent, the initiatives of this university come from top management, and not from Council. Council is not heavily involved because they are part-time appointees; so most of the initiatives come from executive management on the basis of a strategic plan".*

An HDI commented that

> "... we are totally committed I think, but I think you are right that the council's position is that they do not develop policy, they approve policy that is put before it, they don't develop policy, that is external people. The management of the institution have the responsibility to develop policies and so forth and to submit to council, which we did, but it has taken us a long time."

What this means in the context of the research question is that policies are conceptualised within the internal structures and committees steered by senior management. Council, therefore, indirectly influences policy formulation before they adopt it after extensive internal discussion.

Historically Afrikaans institutions reported on sound language policies that have been adopted by way of harmonizing communication strategies within the institution. Language seems to be a sensitive issue, and as a means of communication they made a policy to become an *"institution of dual-medium of instruction"*, meaning that Afrikaans and English are the languages used in all correspondence with their clients. No policy exists to have any of the combinations with African languages. As stated, *"those clients who preferred to undertake their courses in a particular language for purposes of marketing were free to do so"*.

Additionally, as a matter of policy they compensate for the disadvantaged backgrounds of some students by adopting policies that would cater for the special needs of their students. In HDIs the language policy is not an issue. However, the illustration on institutional policies clearly shows the differences in historical and cultural influences in HEIs, and how the quality of education provision is not the same.

7.3.1.4 STRATEGIC PLANNING

"Council as the governing body in terms of the law operated within the strategic plan of the institution" is a statement made by both HDIs and HAIs. The strategic plan was developed through the input of role-players and stakeholders within the institution. The majority of the institutions reported that they normally went through the process of a SWOT analysis that enabled them to identify key areas of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The strategic plan, according to those institutions is *"time-bound"*. Regular monitoring of activities and progress made seem to be the essential ingredients of a good strategic plan. One HAI is currently reviewing its strategic planning document to align it with the new developments in higher education. *"A good strategic planning document was considered to be an indicator of quality in the institution"*. Some institutions made their strategic planning documents available for perusal by the researcher. Others made mention to them without providing them. This is understandable in South African higher education circles where competition, rather than co-operation characterises the system. Some institutions regard their strategic planning documents as confidential and sensitive because it is where they outline their strategies for their niche markets.

Whereas council was expected to familiarize itself with the strategic planning document, senior management was expected to drive the process. This is the view of all HEIs interviewed.

A case in point was made about the process of compiling a strategic planning document where a committee identified areas to be scanned in their environment, then a few staff members with expertise wrote short resumes and compiled one report out of those various inputs.

The next step would then be to prioritise these areas and appoint persons to each write a chapter of the document. Before this was finalised, it was distributed through the institutional intranet for comments and thereafter sent to Senate. Once senate had given its support, the document would then be sent to Council for implementation and monitoring. If the environment changed the plan would be reviewed and some areas may, of necessity not be continued (depending on the circumstances), and/or new developments may be added to give a particular strategic focus. These steps are largely reported by a Historically Afrikaans institution. It concurs with an assertion that quality underpins their strategic planning as an institution of higher learning.

In other institutions strategic planning documents were made available to the researcher in order to illustrate how some institutions went about their planning framework. It was also noted that some institutions were in the process of developing their strategic planning documents in line with the developments in higher education in South Africa. This point illustrates the different institutional cultures and how they relate to quality. Available public documents are an indication of a measure of quality in the system. Non-availability is an indication of internal problems that may result in the perception of lower quality in comparison to other institutions. HDIs that were interviewed referred boldly to the strategic planning documents, some produced them, whereas others could not as much as one historically English institution could not. The unevenness that is displayed in institutions is indicative of the problem statement made in Chapter1 of this study.

Where these comprehensive plans were available they covered their mission statements, planning framework, their niche areas in order to demonstrate the institutional delivery mechanism. The complexities in higher education continued to be an impediment in some institutions especially with respect to extensive submissions being sought from time to time by the Department of Education, and

the looming uncertainties in the higher education sector with the NWG Report on the reconfiguration of the higher education system in South Africa.

There was an element of reluctance with one institution that was facing a merger because perceptions were that it would turn into a take-over of that institution. These perceptions seemed to have a negative impact on some individuals and were leading to lower morale and little commitment in certain instances that may impact negatively on quality and service delivery. The governance structural arrangements that may germinate from the merger are putting staff in awkward positions, and that does not do much for good strategic planning.

7.3.1.5 ALLOCATION OF SCARCE RESOURCES

The scarcity of resources is a perennial problem in the higher education sector as demonstrated in Chapter 6 (Section 9.5 and 9.11 of the questionnaire). In these interviews it was indicated by HDIs that their financial planning framework was in place but *"institutions were facing serious backlog as a result of their disadvantaged background"*. The need for re-dress funding was also mooted and the state was blamed for *"not providing adequate funding to certain institutions that carried the backlog of apartheid funding"*.

The unstable higher education environment was also mentioned as having a negative impact on the finances of institutions, as one HDI said " ... our 5-year financial plan is in place, *there's no need for the state to ask institutions when the environment is so unstable"*. This was attributed to declining student enrolments in some institutions, and to some degree the high student debt.

Other institutions appeared to be more financially viable and were able to present no-deficit budgets to their Councils in a given financial year. Where there was a strategic reason to fund a particular activity, their financial *"reserves or cross subsidisation"* would enable them to go ahead a fund that particular activity which

they planned accurately, and was calculated to pay off in a couple of years. An example was made of a strategic decision to enrol more African students in the Natural Sciences at one HAI. This activity required marketing at school level, upgrading of teacher qualifications at school level, foundation courses to be introduced and so on. This initiative was tied to the "value for money" approach in relation to the "fitness for purpose" approach for that particular institution. If this activity is not going to provide the return in investment, they would not go ahead with it. This council approach supports the broader transformation agenda by "creating an enabling environment for students from designated group to have access and quality programmes where they were initially not permitted to study" (see Introduction in Chapter 1), was an assertion of an HAI that is seemingly serious about access and quality.

The scenario presented in these interviews was that of indigent institutions as opposed to the more affluent institutions of higher learning. This picture concurs with the research problem in that although institutions are currently legislated to be equal in the eyes of the law, there are glaring backlogs in some institutions although it appeared from one remark that there is a bit of wastage of the scarce resources in certain institutions. If this perception was anything to go by it therefore calls upon the leadership and management structures to prioritise their needs and put mechanisms in place that would eradicate wastage if it existed. Nevertheless, the influence demonstrated by Councils in this section is in alignment with the quality assurance imperatives of promoting good practice.

7.3.2 GOVERNANCE AT THE LEVEL OF SENATE

Chapter 2 (section 5.3) gave an outline of the role and functions of an academic Senate in terms of the law but also in line with the historical development of Senates in the academe. The following key concepts were explored in the interviews in relation to how the [transformed] senates influence the QA mechanisms in their institutions:

7.3.2.1   MAINTENANCE OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Academic standards are the life-blood of any academic institution everywhere else in the world (Harvey, 1996: 207). The historical context of institutions of higher learning in South Africa led to other institutions being perceived as having inferior academic standards. Others are perceived as having superior academic standards. This perception on standards is the measure or criterion (or set of criteria) against which the higher education enterprise is to be judged. According to Barnett (1995:55) "it is the performance against the standards in question that determines whether the enterprise is of high quality or not".

Some HAIs have impressive postgraduate and research output to an extent that Senates in some of these institutions are geared more towards the improvement of academic standards. Some HDIs claimed that they had very robust Senates in the tradition of their institutions, and these are playing a significant role in quality assurance.

One HAI perspective was that although the job of Senate was central to quality and good academic standards, they encountered problems of constituting quorums for several meetings of Senate. Crudely put *"some academics simply stay away from meetings and prefer to do other things, be they research, teaching and other activities." This issue is a concern to these institutions and measures are being put in place to encourage senators to attend meetings.*

At another institution (HAI - entrepreneurial-expanding), the restructuring of Senates by the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and the institutional statute helped the situation in that the total membership of Senate was significantly reduced and the restructuring of departments into multi-disciplinary schools enabled Senate to focus more on the maintenance of academic standards. Initially, the Executive Committee of Senates were "overburdened with extensive Senate work" in one HAI.

The level of debate at Senate as indicated by one HDI technikon (emerging-stable), about programmes offered, or programmes proposed, seems to improve the discourse that took place in academic boards. It was mentioned that *"quality is embedded in departments themselves"*, and *"some institutions have advisory committees to Senate with the sole purpose of improving the academic standards of institutions"*. The maintenance of academic standards seem to be done in collaboration with professional councils/associations that further assist in the accreditation of programmes offered at institutions, such as the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA). It should be noted that this function now resorts under the HEQC (as the ETQA primarily responsible for higher education, and expected to collaborate with other ETQAs operating in the sector) for all public and private higher education providers in this country. Although quality seemed to be getting prominence at certain institutions as a result of newer interventions like the HEQC, funding for quality remained a problem, e.g. *funding for academic reviews is either non-existent or taken from decentralised units,* as one HDI mentioned. The view is that it should resort under one centralised unit charged with the institutional and programme/subject reviews at the institution. This is the pattern that was indicated in Chapter 6 on the Economic Considerations.

Acceptable academic standards in some technikons are attested to by the high level of demand of their students by industry/employers as indicated

> *"it is through those initiatives that our students are so employable and in demand, I mean, I have in fact I have fights now with some of the industries because by 2nd and 3rd year they come in and book out my students ... and I say I want them here for post-graduate training... so it is a competition between them and me".*

The interaction through curriculum review with advisory boards for every department led to high employability rate of their graduates. This is an indication that senate plays a pivotal role in the maintenance and improvement of academic

standards in some of the HDIs, although there are glaring disparities between HDI and HAIs in this respect.

7.3.2.2   IMPROVEMENT/DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO QUALITY

The developmental approach to quality seemed to be supported by all institutions. They viewed the improvement dimension of quality as appropriate to the prevailing circumstances in the higher education sector in South Africa. However, a need is expressed by HDIs that institutions must be supported by way of building capacity in those [institutions] that were struggling as a result of the competing priorities in the sector.

Institutions viewed the self-evaluation exercises as essential to the developmental approach to quality in that

> *"there are reports about students from supervisors in Advisory committees and these evaluations bring about improvement over time"* and another said *"it assists in reviewing the curriculum and bringing innovations from industry, our curriculum development person sits in these committees, our quality person sits on all those committees".*

In self-evaluation, an element of accountability was built and institutions could then establish benchmarks. This view was found to concur with Jackson and Lund (2000:55), that the developmental review should contain the following elements:

❑ Departmental self-evaluation of current arrangements using standard survey instruments.

❑ Collection of sample documents to illustrate how such arrangements worked in practice.

❑ Discussions involving departmental and institutional staff, and

□ Feedback reports for each department and a summary report that provided an overview of current arrangements and highlighted noteworthy practices.

The improvement/developmental approach encouraged some departments to "share good practice" and also established solid "collaborative networks" in those institutions that appeared more advanced than others.

7.3.2.3 INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

Some Historically Advantaged institutions appear to take the quality of their products quite seriously and seem to be investing in building a cohort of internationally competitive scholars and programmes. One institution has as its mission *"to be internationally competitive and locally relevant"*. To this end they placed a particular emphasis on their research output and introduced "Outstanding Performers" Awards that are highly competitive.

Participants are supported institutionally and encouraged and rewarded by affording institutions to *"be the best"* in what they did, and be able to do it on an international or even at a global scale. They are of the view that "*to be internally competitive meant nothing to them because an overseas competitor (in some programme) could knock them out without any meaningful resistance if they did not focus on the quality of what they did"*.

They modified their staff promotion system (reward structure) toward the goal of internationalisation. These institutions also put money into developing and nurturing productive international collaborations. This was viewed by a large entrepreneurial HAI as an element of quality that an institution of higher learning should strive to achieve.

Another group of institutions (HAIs) claimed that they had extensive student and staff exchange programmes *"with only reputable institutions".* *"Post-graduate exchanges are proportionally more than undergraduate exchanges".* These institutions further enjoy international accreditation of their professional programmes, and they also have external examiners for the Masters and Doctoral candidates from foreign universities. This is an indication of the role played by institutional governance structures towards quality enhancement in their institutions. This dimension benefits the entire higher education sector, ans places South African higher education institutions on a pedestal in the international market (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.8).

On the contrary, HDIs seem to be lagging behind in this aspect, which is another indication of the disparities that are still in the system, a challenge left for the governance structures to do something about. There are HDIs that have sound international linkages programmes funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), administered by the Tertiary Education Linkages Programme (TELP) with the objective of building capacity in HDIs in the following focus areas:

❑ Curriculum and programme development
❑ Student academic development
❑ Staff development
❑ Management and administrative development and
❑ Research collaborations

7.3.2.4   *"VALUE FOR MONEY" FOR CUSTOMERS/STUDENTS*

Some historically advantaged institutions expressed their mindfulness of and sensitivity to their students' disadvantaged background in relation to their fee structures. This, however, did not imply that they would provide inferior programmes to their clients. Some historically disadvantaged institutions indicated that the reigning notion at their institutions was "fitness for purpose"

over "value for money". They argued that what they were all about as an institution, mattered more in their culture.

However, the "value for money" approach as it relates to the responsibility of Senate hinged on "*soliciting project funding so that they would not over-extend themselves and consequently sacrifice quality*". Community service seems to surface from time to time with the view to make institutions more visible around the communities they are purportedly serving. This initiative happens across all the institutions interviewed, and it concurs with institutional approaches to quality in Chapter 6, Section B 3(c).

The employment rate of some students from certain historically disadvantaged institutions was reported to be "*doing marginally well, whereas there were programmes that were not doing well at all*". It was on the basis of this that the concept of "value for money" forced institutions to improve their programme offerings and increase their networks with employers so that their graduates entered the job market upon completion of their study programmes, or soon thereafter.

7.3.3 THE QUALITY FOCUS

All HEIs seemed to support the move toward "*a quality institution*". None of the interviewees were averse to the promotion and assurance of quality at their institutions. Some added however, that "*quality need not be structural alone, it was said to be in a state of mind*". More symbolic statements are required in order to raise the level of awareness of clients/customers as to what the institution stood for.

Apart from the five notions of quality that are known in higher education, two participating institutions added service delivery as one of the quality focus areas.

This is an innovation aimed at influencing the quality of provision in higher education.

The dominating focus on quality in HEIs was the "excellent" academic standards – these included teaching and learning, as well as research. The quality of programmes, both in teaching and research are subject to continuous assessment that was undertaken by Quality Promotion/Assurance Units especially where they have been recently established. Other institutions have been having QPUs for a considerable period of time. Some still do not have them, but are in the process of having QA arrangements as part of their institutional quality management system.

The binary divide of HEIs has also exacerbated the different levels of quality promotion and quality assurance in higher education. The existence of SERTEC for the past decade has placed the technikon sector at a certain level as discussed in Chapter 2. The university sector on the other hand, had their internal and external arrangements that were intended to safeguard their academic integrity.

Some advantaged HEIs viewed the notion of "fitness for purpose" as critical in the quest to improve the economic well being of our society. They were reportedly having their eye on the bigger picture. The drive from the Department of Education, upon recommendation of the Council on Higher Education, further placed institutions of higher learning in a position where they needed to revise their mission statements to reflect the national quality assurance goals. It was for this reason that the "fitness for purpose" notion of quality seemed to be the dominating one. Again, this is an indication of the responsiveness of HEIs to national policy imperatives (cf. Chapter 6, Section C 9.7-9.9).

For institutions that had a financial problem in the recent past, they viewed their focus more toward "value for money" on a quality continuum. It is essential for

these institutions to sort out their financial situations first before they could incur costs in line with the mission statement that has to be read in tandem with resources.

The quality focus of institutions seems to be leaning more toward the core business and international benchmarks. The need to introduce the governance and quality interface seem to have general acceptance although some felt that quality was the business of the academia in HEIs. Others felt that the institutional focus on quality should be aggressively driven from the top structures so that it could filter down and enjoy a buy-in from other campus stakeholders. *"Quality need not be the sole domain of the academic sector"* as one of the participants asserted. It is the cornerstones of this study not to focus on the traditional QA approach, but bring about an innovation of the governance dimension into quality.

The angle of quality as "transformation" is tied to the employability of graduates and research output at post-graduate level. The employer community was also mentioned for their role in providing indicators for the quality of the graduates that eventually left HEIs with the purpose of adding value to the economy. This is another influence brought about by senate in influencing quality assurance mechanisms.

The overall impression gained on the quality focus of institutions was that of improvement. Institutions happened to be at different stages of development in terms of human resources expertise, financial viability, internal quality and management systems, and it appears that the *"cost of quality"* should also be brought to bear.

7.3.4 INSTITUTIONAL FORUM (IF)

This is a relatively new structure that was borne out of the Broad Transformation Forums and most institutions did not see how the Institutional Forum could be involved in the quality improvement cycles. Some historically advantaged institutions regarded them as a "*non-event*" to an extent that they "*could not even be able to elect a chairperson*" for the Institutional Forum.

Others encounter the same tensions that were prevalent in the early 1990s of power struggles and lack of clarity and understanding of the role of the [Broad] Transformation Forums. It appears from the discussions that some senior administrators were facing the challenge of "*constantly reminding Institutional Forums that they were 'only advisory' to Councils*", and that they were not charged with the running of the institutions.

However, these are governance structures that fulfill certain mandates in terms of the current legislation. In order to keep working on this challenge, CHET in co-operation with the Department of Education organised the National Institutional Forums Conference in August 2001 which was a capacity building project entitled "**Enhancing Governance through Innovation: Building Participation in Institutional Governance.**"

It was felt by some uncertain-unstable institutions that there was no need for this additional structure of governance because all stakeholders are represented in almost, if not all committee structures. The introduction of this structure was viewed as "*a political move by the government*", and they did not see at this stage how it could add value in the system.

In an attempt to promote the ideals of co-operative governance as outlined in higher education legislation the Institutional Forum Conference outlined some of the following factors that necessitated the **"Re-thinking Stakeholderism"**:

❑ Stakeholder conduct in the Institutional Forum must be in the institutions' interest and not individual or constituencies' interest.

❑ Policy framework is necessary to establish a **code of good practice/conduct** and stipulate principles that would regulate behaviour within Institutional Forum meetings.

❑ Institutional Forums should have strategic plans integrated and supporting the strategic plan of the institution, must also find a way to co-ordinate all relevant committee and stakeholder inputs in promoting these processes.

❑ Institutional Forums should embark on building trust, as lack of trust promotes individualism and constituency ideals, which is normally not in the interest of the HEIs.

❑ Contestation must be constructive and not destructive, and should enhance co-operation amongst all members of the Institutional Forum and promote institutional progress.

❑ Strategic objectives of Institutional Forums in co-operative governance, must be open and transparent (CHET/DoE, 2001:4).

The impressions of the institutions that participated in this study are confirmed by the concluding remarks of the CHET/DoE Report (2001:5) that Institutional Forums as legal structures, *"should move away from the sharp oppositional image of the past and fulfil their role in co-operative governance to one of adhering to their functions in the Act and relevant Statutes...."*

Another dimension mentioned by HEIs was that Institutional Forums were *"dominated by union representatives and students"*. In some HAIs, though to a lesser extent, they reported management as chairing or dominating in

representation. This assertion is confirmed by a publication of the DoE and CHET (2000:59-66) outlining the composition of Institutional Forums in all HEIs in South Africa in April 2000. This is an indication that not all is well in the governance of HEIs and the quality imperatives yet again come to the centre stage because it is only through a supportive higher education environment that stakeholders can be motivated to add value to the institution, and thereby fulfil the goal of 'a quality institution' as outlined in 7.3.3 above.

7.4 CONCLUSION

These interviews increased the insight of the researcher in so far as the institutional dynamics that influence quality in HEIs were concerned. Again, the unevenness in the system, manifests itself in how Councils, Senates and Institutional Forums conduct their business toward the quality goals of HEIs.

Institutions that were fairly well established with a strong strategic focus appeared to understand the role of governance structures as only trustees who must endorse what had been presented to them by committees and management.

Other institutions come from a background of structures that were politicized to an extent that the quality focus of the institutions was threatened and clouded by other issues of no serious consequence. Whereas others were still rocked by uncertainties of mergers and how these would translate into long-term quality outcomes, it remains to be seen whether the 'good' intentions of the NPHE will pay off in the long- term.

The academic Senates continue to dominate the quality focus in so far as teaching and research are concerned, but there is an integration of functions of Senate and Council toward quality goals. This is captured in mission statements, strategic plans and policies that were formulated, adopted and implemented by

the ultimate governing body. There is consensus that quality cuts across all systems of governance (except the uncertainties of the Institutional Forums) and operational units of HEIs. According to some participants *"quality is a way of thinking"* and each individual or unit was expected to do their bit and add to the bigger picture of quality improvement everywhere else in the institution.

CHAPTER 8

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter summarises the findings made in the study, makes recommendations based on those findings, and also outlines possible themes for further research on the governance and quality interface in the South African higher education system. The rationale for this study was to investigate the impact that the transformed institutional governance structures are making towards the promotion and assurance of quality in institutions of higher learning.

In this study, the researcher has developed a framework within which institutional governance structures can evaluate their performance in relation to quality assurance mechanisms in their institutions. This was undertaken in an attempt to answer the research question:

HOW DO TRANSFORMED INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES INFLUENCE QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION?

Higher education transformation in South Africa is at the top of the Education Ministry's agenda since the democratic dispensation in 1994. This is an endeavour to address and correct the past imbalances in the system through structural transformation. Transformation is taking place at both the systemic and institutional levels since the NCHE (1996) Report, the Education White Paper 3 (1997), the SAQA Act (1995) and the Higher Education Act (1997). The

latter Act has been amended in 1999, 2000 and 2001 in order to improve the first version of the Act. The improvements relate mainly to institutional arrangements such as the repeal of certain obsolete laws and Private Acts, institutional mergers, pronouncements on foreign students, Councils of public higher education and their conflict of interests, etc.

In the midst of all these changes, quality is at the centre of competing priorities for the higher education system that requires equity and redress, adequate resources and institutions that are responsive to the broader agenda of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

8.1.1 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to explore the extent and manner in which the transformed institutional structures are influencing quality assurance mechanism in their institutions. The reason for this aim is the improvement of productivity and accountability in their systems. The study sought to identify appropriate QA mechanisms that could serve the government and institutional imperatives.

Traditionally, the focus on quality has been predominantly on the academic activities of institutions of higher learning. This pattern will not change in the foreseeable future as illustrated in the data provided **in Chapter 6** (Section 4(a)). In order for the core business of HEIs to improve there has to be accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of systems, credible quality assurance and quality management systems. The inter-relationship of governance structures calls for the strategic focus areas that build on good practice and international benchmarking standards that will place the South African higher education system firmly on the map.

The study attempts to highlight the historical classification of HEIs and how they are responsive to the elements of good practice through their governance

structures. The four classifications (see Glossary) are within the reigning conceptions of Historically Disadvantaged and Advantaged Institutions in South African higher education.

Additionally, the study attempts to draw the attention of HEIs to develop effective QA management practices that can be accessible, improved and shared in the higher education sector so that the whole system (and institutions) can derive the benefit.

In order to achieve the above aims of the thesis, in **Chapter 1** a theme analysis was constructed in order to clarify the concepts that appeared throughout the study. These concepts are:

❑ Higher Education Transformation

❑ Higher Education Institutions

❑ Institutional Governance Structures

❑ Co-operative Governance

❑ Quality and Quality Assurance

❑ International Perspectives on QA

The literature review, the conceptual response to the research question, and the development of the concepts later operationalised by way of collecting data has been discussed. The quantitative and qualitative research methods that were employed in the study are also discussed in Chapter 1 and developed further in the study.

The study is based on quantitative and qualitative research methods as well as the historical and contemporary sources on governance and quality assurance literature. A questionnaire was distributed among higher education institutions and was it followed up with personal interviews in universities and technikons in South Africa. Adequate information was amassed from these rich interactions with senior academics and administrators of both the HDIs and HAIs.

In Chapter 2 a logical and descriptive analysis of the legislative framework was done at the national (systems) and institutional levels. Structures of governance at Macro-, Meso-, and Micro-levels are discussed in relation to quality assurance.

Due to the fact that the focus of the study is on institutional governance structures (Micro-level), the researcher found it compelling to differentiate among the different structures (Council, Senate, Institutional Forum) and the office of the Vice-Chancellor/Principal who, as the Chief Executive Officer is Council-*in-loco* in its absence on campus. The Student Representative Council as representing one of the constituent customers was briefly discussed in relation to how they fit in the transformed structures.

Apart from the structural arrangements, mention was also made of the pressures facing higher education in this country as well as abroad. Among the many pressures, quality and standards also come into play. This chapter demonstrates that quality assurance in higher education cannot be discussed in isolation. These pressures have a direct impact on quality at all levels in the institution.

In Chapter 3 the Quality Assurance framework, starting with the historical overview of quality in industrial models was discussed. A few prominent 'quality gurus' and how they influenced the thinking of higher education quality experts is explored in this chapter. The works of the 'quality gurus' is extensively used in the education sector, and a case is made that they can also be applied by structures of governance in their endeavour to build a sustainable quality assurance management system for their institutions.

A brief outline of the different Quality Management systems and how the notions of quality and standards inter-relate, (as informed by the quality experts) was given prominence in this Chapter. The Chapter captured the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

By way of laying a theoretical basis for responding to the above, in **Chapter 4**, international perspectives on quality assurance are explored. Four countries, (Australia, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom) that are considered to be among the formidable exporters of higher education, are discussed in relation to how the international approaches could influence the sharing of good practice. This was done at both systems and institutional (case studies) level in order to demonstrate the significance of international best practice to the South African higher education scenario.

There are a number of similarities in the higher education systems of the selected case studies, especially in relation to the prominent role played by the state in funding arrangements aimed at enhancing quality at their institutions.

In Chapter 5 the research methodology operationalised in the study is discussed to highlight the complementarity of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The research paradigm, strategy, instruments used, data collection, the sample and rationale for using these methodologies are discussed.

Particular care was given to the objectivity, reliability and validity of the results by ensuring the qualified participants who have a deeper understanding of the reconfiguration of higher education and how it affects quality were engaged through questionnaire interactions and later, face-to-face interviews for the triangulation of responses given.

In Chapter 6 the presentation and analysis of the quantitative (Questionnaire) data are discussed. This Chapter also provides the framework within which governance structures can develop, maintain and improve their role in Quality Assurance, with the caution that this should happen at different degrees owing to the historical classifications of HEIs in South Africa.

In Chapter 7 the presentation and analysis of the interview data is discussed in a manner that identifies how the interview data reinforces or conflicts with the questionnaire data. This approach brought about additional information on the role that governance structures are playing towards the quality goal(s) of HEIs according to their classifications. This Chapter also provides for the triangulation of results so that this study is scientific and could add value in the reconfiguration of higher education.

8.2 FINDINGS

8.2.1 Chapter 1 demonstrates that

8.2.1.1   the policies and practices pertaining to higher education had been flawed to a degree of discriminatory funding arrangements in the sector, with HDIs suffering the most since 1959;

8.2.1.2   based on the conceptualisation of governance and quality assurance in the transformation context, there is a need to recognise that institutional governance structures are at different developmental stages across the surveyed universities and technikons in South Africa;

8.2.1.3   the development of a framework for institutional quality assurance and management has become critical for governance structures to evaluate their performance against the set framework/standards.

On the strength of the above it is apparent that the development of an institutional quality assurance and management system for governance structures is a matter of urgency in this country.

8.2.2 Chapter 2 shows that

8.2.2.1 the transformation of higher education put pressure on HEIs from different angles such as inadequate resource allocation and accountability imperatives, growing market demand for quality and standards and the need to satisfy the primary customers (students).

8.2.2.2 Institutional governance structures inter-relate and are expected to complement one another towards the attainment of institutional quality goals. The mandated responsibilities of councils could form the basis of a standard against which council can be judged objectively in pursuance of its fiduciary duties;

8.2.2.3 The Quality Assurance structures of HEIs at the meso-level are at different levels of development (binary system - with the change in legislation imposing a further uncertainty in the governance structures, e.g. the abolition of Private Acts for Universities and the dissolution of SERTEC for technikons).

The changing legal framework and the expositions of the White Paper 3 form the basis of the development of a Quality Assurance and Management system that governance structures can adopt for purposes of good practice.

8.2.3 Chapter 3 points out that

8.2.3.1 the historical underpinnings of quality that started in industry have a bearing on how HEIs have conceptualised the notions of quality for the core functions of institutions;

8.2.3.2 the models developed by the 'quality gurus' permeate across management structures of institutions and organisations, and can thus be applicable to good governance at Council, Senate and the Institutional Forums;

8.2.3.3 Total Quality Management in higher education can be applied insofar as to develop the different types of HEIs. Some institutions need more assistance than others towards the development of an institutional Quality Assurance and Management system, with resource allocation (finance, human resource expertise) playing a pivotal role;

8.2.3.4 The characteristics of the Quality Assurance and Management Planning framework integrating models developed by experts, qualify management systems and the SAQA's elements of good practice are a comprehensive data bank that emphasised both the improvement and accountability dimensions of quality assurance in governance structures.

Based on the discussion in Chapter 3 it is clear that quality and quality assurance must gain prominence in other structures of governance in order for the institutional quality assurance and management framework to have ownership institution-wide.

8.2.4 In Chapter 4 it has been argued that

8.2.4.1 the international perspectives on quality assurance and the pressures of globalisation are essential ingredients of an institutional quality assurance and management system. International approaches promote benchmarking standards in higher education;

8.2.4.2 institutional approaches to international networks hinge more on the core business of institutions as it is dominated by academic exchanges in teaching and research. Senate as a governance structure responsible for this function can benefit from the international best practices shared in this chapter towards quality enhancement.

Based on the discussion in **Chapter 4** it is, therefore essential to recognise that the institutional quality assurance and management framework cannot be developed without taking into consideration the international, national and institutional processes and developments in Quality Assurance. It is through this approach that lessons learned from other countries can be developed to avoid the shortcomings that were experienced in the past.

8.2.5 Chapter 5 highlighted the fact that

8.2.5.1 the majority of HEIs (78%) participated in the study with a good spread according to their historical classification. This enabled the researcher to see the angles from which these institutions approach Quality Assurance in their governance structures. It further enabled the researcher to see the receptive nature of HEIs to legal requirements for governance and quality, and how these support their strategic objectives;

8.2.5.2 the methodology employed in the study is complementary to the on-going discourse on the reconfiguration of the higher education system in South Africa.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative research methods the triangulation of results was found to concur with the issues emanating from the research question. Reliability and credibility of the

instruments enable the study to make a contribution towards the development of institutional quality assurance and management system that will enhance good governance and the quality focus.

8.2.6 In Chapter 6 it has been **found** that

8.2.6.1   there was general compliance by HDIs and HAIs in relation to the stipulations of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 with respect to the establishment of transformed institutional structures, a dimension that was attributed to stable institutional environments and good leadership.

Where compliance was a problem it was attributed to internal problems and prolonged consultations with stakeholders; this demonstrates the unevenness in the manner that HEIs conduct their business in South Africa.

8.2.6.2   the majority of institutional responses (both HDIs and HAIs) gave an indication that their governing Councils needed assistance insofar as delineating the role of Councils and that of management with the purpose of attaining quality systems in the institution; capacity building is identified as a need in governance structures if they have to influence quality assurance mechanisms.

The classification of institutions as outlined in **Chapter 6** gives a in-depth scenario of the unevenness of HEIs without being overly negative of the circumstances that cause institutions to classify themselves in that manner;

8.2.6.3   quality assurance in HEI governance structures is taking place albeit to varying degrees as the data showed. This is a confirmation of the hypothesis that is made in **Chapter 1**;

8.2.6.4   accountability and improvement dimensions of quality assurance are taking place at Council, Senate and to a limited extent in the Institutional Forum. This finding is informed by how the different types of governance structures in these HEIs understand their role. Some governance structures are overly enthusiastic about their duties [at HDIs], whereas others allow management the space to account and improve those aspect that required attention [at HAIs];

8.2.6.5   The institutional dynamics that influence the quality perspectives at institutions were found to be characteristic of an unstable and uneven higher education environment insofar as the image (internal and external), financial viability and the perceived relations with the DoE;

8.2.6.6   The economic considerations for higher education remain a growing concern that there is no adequate funding for higher education in South Africa. The situation at HDIs is much worse than in HAIs as a result of the past imbalances. This is a world-wide phenomenon, and yet it calls for the institutional governance structures and other role-players to view this in the context of the cost of quality as Crosby has warned (cf. Chapter 3). The issue of funding requires creativity and innovation on the part of governance structures towards the fulfilment of institutional quality mandates.

It should be noted that **Chapter 6** therefore, alerts us to the fact that there is an indication that the unevenness in the system and at institutional levels, is addressed by national policies (see NPHE, 2001) and the need to revise the funding formula for higher education. This is a positive first step and a 'good faith' effort by the South African government on the one hand, and the responsiveness of HEIs to the transformation and quality imperatives on the other.

8.2.7 On the basis of the data analysed in **Chapter 7** it has been **found** that

8.2.7.1 governing Councils do in fact take their duties and responsibilities seriously, although at times there are potential clashes with management structures as far as the day-to-day duties of the latter are concerned in some HDIs. The situation in HAIs is different in that the governing structures are reported o accord their management structures the liberty and confidence to run their institutions effectively and efficiently.

8.2.7.2 strategic plans are in place in most institutions, and that operational structures are held to account to their governance structures;

8.2.7.3 the classification of institutions shows a different outlook to resource availability and allocation in HAIs and HDIs, with the former being well resourced in comparison to the latter. This is a concern that has a bearing on quality and standards, as well as service delivery, especially in HDIs.

8.2.7.4 the transformation and changed composition of Senate have an influence on how Senate conducts its business in relation to the past. Senate is still regarded as the supreme governing structure on academic matters, and yet in some institutions it seems like 'business as usual', which is a concern for the improvement dimension of QA in the system and in the institutions affected; it becomes a question of how responsive some of the HAIs are to the structural transformation agenda?

8.2.7.5 the Institutional Forum (IF) as a relatively new structure in the academic fraternity, and unique to the South African situation, does not seem to enjoy support and continued existence in both HDIs and HAIs. Although HEIs are in a compliance mode, they do not see how the IF

can contribute in the quality aspects of the institution. This becomes an efficiency question for the legislature since much of their services are incorporated in the existing organisational/ institutional structures.

8.2.7.6 the proliferation of international higher education providers is considered as a real threat to the growth of public HEIs.

Finally, the broader higher education transformation agenda is being operationalised at institutions, and a framework for the quality assurance and management system needs to be developed in order to accomplish the broader policy goals.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the problem statement as stated in **Chapter 1**, section 1.6 and the findings as indicated above, the following recommendations are made:

8.3.1 *ON THE BASIS OF THE NEED TO PROMOTE GOOD PRACTICE IN INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MANAGEMENT AS MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 8.2.1.3, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT*

The framework within which governance structures should evaluate themselves needs to be developed along the lines of mandated responsibilities for Councils as outlined in **Chapter 2, section 2.6.1.3.**

This framework will enable councils to become more focused on accountability issues and allow structures such as senates to focus more on the improvement aspects for which they would be accountable to councils. This will enhance the principle of cooperative governance.

8.3.2 ON THE BASIS OF THE DISCUSSIONS MADE IN SECTIONS 8.2.4.1 AND 8.2.4.2 IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT

Prominence of Quality Assurance in other structures of governance should be developed through further investigation and research.

The reason for this recommendation is that QA should not be viewed as an 'add-on' to all other functions in HEIs. Structures of governance should be seen to be efficient, productive and trusted, and it is from this approach that the international dimensions to quality can flourish.

8.3.3 ON THE BASIS OF THE FINDINGS MADE IN SECTION 8.2.6.5 IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT

The unevenness of HEIs as historically significant can be addressed by institutional quality assurance mechanisms that recognises the damage caused by influences geared toward thwarting progress and quality outcomes in different types of institutions. The DoE can play a supportive role to institutions by recognising and implementing strategies that will enhance quality systems, without perpetuating discrimination.

The data shows that the majority of the HEIs have positive perceptions of the DoE, and it is on that basis that it can play a supporting role without itself not falling into the trap of the micro-managing institutions.

8.3.4 ON THE BASIS OF THE FINDINGS MADE IN SECTION 8.2.6.6 IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT

Quality Assurance should be funded adequately both at the systems and institutional levels as was initially done in Australia. This would be a return

in investment for the country and a burgeoning learning society would enable institutional structures to have more impact on quality assurance at their institutions.

8.3.5 ON THE BASIS OF THE FINDINGS MADE IN SECTION 8.2.3 IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT

Elements of the questionnaire developed in this study could form the basis of the framework for the institutional quality assurance and management system that governance structures could incorporate in their policies.

8.3.6 ON THE BASIS OF THE FINDINGS MADE IN 8.2.7.5 IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT

An extensive investigation be initiated and research be conducted to determine whether the sustenance of the IF would benefit the higher education system, and international perspectives should be sought in this respect.

8.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

8.4.1 There are some shortcomings associated with the methodology in the study such as (i) the difficulty of gaining access to institutions for in-depth studies, and (ii) the problem of interpretation where institutionally the reality is interpreted through the eyes of the respondents.

The researcher continued with this methodology in spite of the above because it has more utility for the higher education sector. To find out in a probing manner what the factors that play themselves out are, and how this could improve the systems-thinking in this transformation era. In order

to address this shortcoming, the triangulation of the results was performed to develop meaning out of the data.

8.4.2 HEIs were asked to each complete and return 3 questionnaires. The institutional responses varied between 1 and 3, with a limited number of institutions reporting that they decided to collectively formulate one response per institution, when the intention was to have multiple observations to the issues raised in the instrument. It may be possible that the objectivity, reliability and validity of the responses from those institutions were compromised by having one instead of three [possibly different] responses.

8.4.3 Some respondents provided their "expert" opinion as opposed to the 'institutional' view/approaches that were as far as possible sought by the researcher. The reasoning behind this negligible deviation was that there was no 'official' institutional position/statements on some of the questions raised in the questionnaire.

8.4.4 Additionally, a small group (6 HEIs) of institutions was selected on the basis of their availability within the broad classifications of HDIs and HAIs, and further Emerging-Stable, Uncertain-Unstable, Entrepreneurial-Expanding and Traditional-Elite. There was an even spread of the technikon and university sector, and yet the researcher recognises that no over-generalisation should be made based on the responses although this was a fairly representative and credible group in the higher education sector. The results can however, be generalised to include the entire higher education sector.

8.4.5 Some of the institutional representatives were not comfortable to discuss some issues owing to the uncertainties that are lingering in higher education as outlined in Chapter 6 and 7, Section C (10) and 7.2.4 and

7.2.5 respectively. This affects a small number of institutions, and this may have compromised the objectivity, reliability and validity of the responses in those institutional climates.

In spite of all the shortcomings outlined above the study can still be relied upon based on the measures undertaken to ensure the objectivity, reliability and validity of the results as outlined in Chapter 5. Further, a triangulation of the results was performed, and a clear pattern has evolved that governance structures in both HDIs and HAIs do make an influence on the QA mechanisms in their institutions although differentially as a result of the histories of institutions.

8.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher is of the opinion that this study offers the governance and quality interface at institutional level a perspective that serves as a departure point for further study and research. In this regard further potential areas of research are listed below:

8.5.1 In order to verify and elaborate further on the findings and recommendations that were made in this study, more extensive research can be undertaken by the implementation of the framework provided **in Chapter 6** for the development of institutional quality assurance and management system for governance structures. The implementation of the framework can be undertaken on a limited scale taking into account the classifications of HEIs in the South African context.

8.5.2 Research regarding governance and quality imperatives within the framework of the reconfiguration of the higher education system (post National Working Group recommendations to the Minister of Education).

8.5.3 A study to assess the successes and shortcomings of institutional governance structures since the 1997 higher education dispensation.

8.5.4 An investigation to verify the elements of micro-management of institutions by their governing Councils (and to some extent the state interventions), and how this phenomenon impacts on the quality of provision in HEIs.

8.5.5 A project to determine the correlation between the different classes of HEIs and their demonstrated performance during the transformation process.

8.5.6 Research regarding quality management systems established in the transition process and how they could benefit the sector.

8.5.7 Research regarding the level of training and commitment provided to trustees (councillors) and other stakeholders in support of the quality assurance imperatives in South Africa.

8.5.8 A survey on how academic support units in HEIs could feed into good governance by applying the principles of TQM in higher education in South Africa.

8.5.9 Research on the funding of quality assurance *per se* in HEIs (taking into account the financial backlog of institutions) towards the fulfilment of broader institutional purposes.

8.6 CONCLUSION

In this study an attempt was made to propose a framework within which institutional governance structures could be evaluated for purposes of quality

assurance. It is remarkable to notice how the South African higher education system has transformed in a period of less than 5 years, and how HEIs have been responsive to the legal framework and quality assurance requirements. All of these are happening in the context of tensions in the system, financial constraints, historical divisions and the uneven quality assurance arrangements.

This study provides a framework within which institutions of higher learning can evaluate themselves at governance structural levels, and how, in that exercise they can apply international benchmarks in higher education for purposes of improvement and accountability in the system. It also raises the issue of institutional dynamics that inhibit progress in some institutions, and suggests further research that can enable the South African higher education system to compete with the best in the world in spite of the past discriminatory policies and practices. This study has the potential to nourish the envisaged inter-institutional co-operations in higher education in an attempt to address the unevenness in human, financial and physical resources.

Quality and quality assurance will remain on the agenda of academic institutions for a long time to come, and the burgeoning South African higher education system will improve on the basis of a 'good faith' effort by all stakeholders and role-players to add value and become a role model in the developing world. This line of reasoning has implications for the application of certain policy ideas, and clearly, the relationship between governance and quality needs to be re-stated in a system that was historically flawed in these dominating aspects of South African higher education. Many challenges, questions and answers confronting the South African higher education institutions can be contextualised in the statement made by Karl Popper [in Conjectures and Refutations] as cited by Phillips (1987:v) that

> *So my answer to the questions "How do you know? What is the source or the basis of your assertion? What observations have led you to it?" would be: "I do not know: my assertion was merely a*

guess. Never mind the source … if you are interested in the problem which I tried to solve by my tentative assertion, you may help me by criticizing it as severely as you can…"

Karl Popper *(Conjectures and Refutations)*

Whoso loveth correction loveth knowledge, but he that hateth reproof is brutish. (Proverbs, 12:1)

APPENDIX A

From: Themba Mosia
Sent: 04 July 2001 13:54
To: 'Ann Dalgleish'
Subject: RE: PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER A QUESTIONNAIRE

Draft Questionnaire
27-06.doc

Dear Gops

I refer to our brief discussion on the above subject this afternoon. I attach hereto a copy of the questionnaire that ought to be completed by AT LEAST 3 persons at your institution with an understading of quality issues and transformation as they pertain to your institution. They should preferably be from the 3 governance structures, namely, Council, Senate and the Institutional Forum. Your will of course agree with me that some of the members of these structures are common denominators, e.g. The DVC Academic could represent senate or your institutional quality expert or a dean, etc. Council could be represented by the VC or yourself as an Exec. Asst to the VC who would have an understanding of the issues raised, and the IF could be represented by other staff members who understand these concepts and how they relate to the development of the institution.

Responses could be sent directly to me on this address or by mail to:

N Themba Mosia
Deputy Registrar
Medical Universiy of Southern Africa
P O Box 197
MEDUNSA 0204

or Fax 012- 521 5902

Thank you so much for coordinating this for me, and i'll keep in touch

Themba
-----Original Message-----
From: Ann Dalgleish [mailto:AnnD@umfolozi.ntech.ac.za]
Sent: 01 June 2001 12:38
To: Themba Mosia
Subject: PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER A QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Mr Mosia

Your letter dated 24 May 2001 has been referred to me for reply.

You are welcome to administer a questionnaire at Technikon Natal. I would suggest that you speak to myself and to Professor Gawe (who deals with Quality Assurance).

Yours sincerely

Gops Chetty
Executive Assistant to the Principal
(direct telephone (031) 204 2662

Themba Mosia

From: Themba Mosia

Sent: 04 July 2001 10:11

To: 'Leon Karstens'

Subject: RE: Questionnaires and interviews

Dear Leon

Our telephonic discussion this morning refers.

Please find a copy of the questionnaire that ought to be completed by at least three (3) persons at your institutions who are fairly knowledgeable about issues of quality and institutional governance. Ideally, these persons should come from the 3 structures of governance, namely, Council, Senate and the Institutional Forum. You will understand though that some members of the campus community are common denominators in all the structures, e.g for senate we could ask the Deputy ice Chancellor for Academic Affairs or any one of the Deans, Institutional Forum could be represented by its chair or any member of the constituencies that has a grasp of the issues mentioned here, and finally Council could be represented by the Vice Chancellor or his designated appointee such as personal assistant, one of the DVCs or a Quality Manager, etc. depending on your structures.

Secondly, the semi structured interview that I would like to conduct with you institution. The interview question is:

> In your opinion, what role has the transformed institutional governance structures played towards the promotion
> and assurance of quality at your institution?

Again, it would be preferable to interview the VC or his designated person that fully understands how these issues interrelate.

leon, I would appreciate it if I could be at your institution before the 24th July since I am also doing some urgent work for the CHE.

Thank you so much for your help

Themba Mosia

-----Original Message-----
From: Leon Karstens [mailto:LKarstens@TechPTA.AC.ZA]
Sent: 20 June 2001 12:43
To: Themba Mosia
Cc: Peter Van Eldik
Subject: Questionnaires and interviews

PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER A QUESTIONNAIRE AND CONDUCT INTERVIEWS AT TECHNIKON PRETORIA

Our telephonic conversation earlier this morning refers.

The Technikon Pretoria has an policy regarding administering of questionnaires and conducting interviews.

The Technikon Pretoria evaluate all questionnaires before it can be administered, the same apply to structured interviews.

Once you finalized your questionnaire you can forwarded it to me as discussed.

We would gladly assist you in providing you with the names of relevant staff inside our institution once your questionnaire have been cleared.

You can contact me at any time for more information or assistance .

Leon Karstens
Head : R&D: Promotion and Support
Tecnikon Pretoria
A University of Technology
Tel: (+27)(12) 318-5155

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
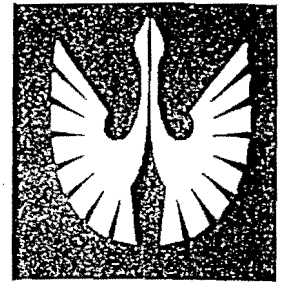
MEDUNSA

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27 July 2001

Prof D A Maughan Brown
Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor
University of Natal
Private Bag X01
SCOTTSVILLE, PIETERMARITZBURG
3209

Dear Prof Maughan Brown

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I refer to your positive response to my request and several telephone discussions with your secretary Ms Moira Bolton regarding the above subject.

Please find included herewith 3 copies of the questionnaires for completion by persons who are knowledgeable on quality and institutional governance issues. Ideally, they should be drawn from the governing Council, Senate and the Institutional Forum (IF), i.e. VC, DVCs, Deans, QA Managers, other executive managers, and possibly a member of the IF who understands the strategic focus of the institution as it relates to the transformation and quality outcomes of the process. This is for purposes of multiple observations.

I hope to arrange an interview shortly with your office during August 2001.

Thank you for your cooperation, and I am looking forward to drawing from your vast experience in this field.

Sincerely

N THEMBA MOSIA
DEPUTY REGISTRAR

MISSION STATEMENT OF MEDUNSA
"We empower the educationally disadvantaged community of Southern Africa by providing excellent community-oriented tertiary education, training and research in the healthand related sciences and we promote services at all levels of health care in our community"

APPENDIX B

The Research Project on how the transformed structures of governance are impacting on the institutional Quality Assurance mechanisms

June 2001

N Themba Mosia
(in partial fulfilment of a PhD)

> **PLEASE READ CAREFULLY PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Background Perspectives

The transformation of higher education in South Africa places issues of quality and quality assurance at the centre of competing priorities. Intense debates since the days of the NCHE, the White Paper 3 on Education, the Higher Education Act 101, of 1997 and its subsequent Amendments, and finally, the establishment of the CHE, succeeded by the launch of the HEQC recently are a clear demonstration that the various education role players are serious about the overhaul of the entire system of higher education. Apart from the legislative imperatives, institutions of higher learning have the responsibility through their governing structures to demonstrate efficient and effective systems of management as well as a developmental (improvement) approach to the core business of teaching and learning, research and community service.

This research project hopes to draw on the international best practices as well as the positive efforts by institutions of higher learning in the establishment, assurance, preservation and improvement of quality throughout the system [and its structures].

PURPOSE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1) to collect and interpret the perspectives of a selected group of respondents from universities and technikons in South Africa with special knowledge of the transformation of governance structures and how it impacts on institutional quality management.

2) to gather information on institutional approaches to quality in order to make an original contribution to the on-going discourse on QA in higher education.

3) to stimulate and promote critical thinking and debate on issues of accountability and improvement in the area of QA.

4) to build capacity within the governing structures by way of raising their level of awareness and fiduciary responsibilities in tandem with the continuous improvement of quality in the academic functions of institutions.

In order to assist in the fulfillment of these purposes please reflect on the following critical items:

- Principles of the White Paper 3 on Education: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997) as it pertains to issues of quality promotion, assurance and management.

- Stipulations of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 as it is pertaining to governing Councils, academic Senates and the Institutional Forums.

- International Perspectives on Quality, especially in the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand

- The 5 Notions of Quality as Lee Harvey & Green see them.

- The systems approach to quality in South Africa.

- The institutional approaches in line with the emerging trends in the reconfiguration of higher education in SA.

Please reflect on the **extent** to which each item is applicable to **your institution, and the degree of importance** your institution attaches to each item.

Your **institutional (official)** position on the questions/statements put is what is required, **not** your expert opinion.

Please complete the questionnaire anonymously and all data will be treated confidentially. After processing the questionnaire, the results will be followed up as far as possible with individual and/or focus group interviews.

No names of persons or institutions will be mentioned in the final synthesis report.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire consists of different types of items.

SECTION A

➢ Some items require a **"OPTIONAL"** responses and you simply tick the appropriate box.
➢ Some items give you a brief background information, and you are then required to respond to an open-ended question in the space provided.

SECTION B

Here you are firstly required to measure the **extent** of the application and then secondly to measure the degree of **importance**. In completing these items, please read the question and then denote firstly the extent to which it is applicable to your institution (according to the scale: "1 = not at all; 2 = partly; 3 = mostly; 4 = fully") and secondly the degree of importance which, in your opinion, your institution attaches to the item concerned (according to the scale : "1 = not at all important; 2 = somewhat important; 3 = very important; 4 = extremely important"). Once again you simply tick the appropriate boxes.

SECTION C

In this section you are required to make a choice of whether you consider the variables to inhibit or promote good governance at your institution and then you indicate to what extent this occurs. You need to make ticks in the appropriate boxes.

If you need to provide additional information please make an indication in the relevant section and add more/further information sheets.

Your co-operation is highly appreciated in completing this questionnaire.

For Office Use

| V1 | | | | | 1-4 |

SECTION A:

LEGISLATIVE IMPERATIVES (TRANSFORMATION) AND INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

1. **Legal Framework:**

   Please consider the following stipulation of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997:72(4) and then answer questions 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 1(d) and 1(e).

   Councils, senates and forums of technikons and universities which existed at the commencement of this Act continue to exist and perform the functions which they performed prior to such commencement, but must comply with the provisions of this Act within 18 months after the commencement of this Act.

   1(a) Had your institution complied with this provision by June 19, 1999?

   Yes ☐   No ☐   V2 ☐ 5

   1(b) If "yes" please share the elements of good practice that facilitated the process within the stipulated 18 months, e.g. stable environment.

   _____   V3 ☐ 6-7
   _____   V4 ☐ 8-9
   _____   V5 ☐ 10-11
   _____   V6 ☐ 12-13

   1(c) If "no" please provide us with the reasons that delayed the process, e.g. prolonged stakeholder discussions.

   _____   V7 ☐ 14-15
   _____   V8 ☐ 16-17
   _____   V9 ☐ 18-19
   _____   V10 ☐ 20-21

   1(d) Prior to the promulgation of the Act was there tension (power relations) between the governing Council and the [Broad] Transformation Forum on your campus

   Yes ☐   No ☐   V11 ☐ 22

4

1(e) If "no" please state why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

V12		23-24
V13		25-26
V14		27-28
V15		29-30

2. Institutional Governance.

2(a) The Institutional Statute was gazetted prior to December of 1999

Yes ☐   No ☐

V16	☐	31

2(b) If your response is "No" please state the reason for the delay.

_____

_____

_____

_____

V17		32-33
V18		34-35
V19		36-37
V20		38-39

2(c) The Private Act of the institution has been duly amended to be in line with the institutional statute.

Yes ☐   No ☐

V21	☐	40

2(d) If your response is "No" to 2(c) above please state the reason why not.

_____

_____

_____

_____

V22		41-42
V23		43-44
V24		45-46
V25		47-48

2(e) Please read the following statement carefully and answer "Yes" or "No".

Institutions of higher learning are encountering difficulties and frustrations with the novel experience of sharing responsibility for institutional governance because some of the stakeholders lack high level skills, appropriate experience and resources, and become overwhelmed by the enormity of the responsibilities which accompany their new roles.

Yes ☐   No ☐

V26	☐	49

2(f) Does Council understand its role in the manner that is stipulated in the Education White Paper 3: *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997)*, e.g. not micro-managing the institution?

Yes ☐ No ☐   V27 ☐ 50

2(g) Choose the category that best describes your institution (refer to the Glossary for clarification).

Emerging–stable institution	
Uncertain-unstable institution	
Entrepreneurial-expanding institution	
Traditional-elite institution	

V28 ☐ 51

2(h) Please state briefly why your institution can be classified in the manner that you have selected.

_____   V29 ☐☐ 52-53
_____   V30 ☐☐ 54-55
_____   V31 ☐☐ 56-57
_____   V32 ☐☐ 58-59

2(i) The transformed governing Council has brought about an improvement in the running of the institution.

Yes ☐ No ☐   V33 ☐ 60

2(j) If "yes" please state the reason briefly

_____   V34 ☐☐ 61-62
_____   V35 ☐☐ 63-64
_____   V36 ☐☐ 65-66
_____   V37 ☐☐ 67-68

2(k) If "no" please state the reason briefly

_____   V38 ☐☐ 69-70
_____   V39 ☐☐ 71-72
_____   V40 ☐☐ 73-74
_____   V41 ☐☐ 75-76

3. Institutional Approach to Quality

3(a) Does quality underpin the strategic plan of the institution?

Yes ☐   No ☐   V42 ☐ 77

3(b) The mission statement of the institution reflects the principles of quality assurance and quality promotion.

Yes ☐   No ☐   V43 ☐ 78

3(c) State the key concepts that support your choice

.

_____   V44 ☐ 79-80

_____   V45 ☐ 81-82

_____   V46 ☐ 83-84

3(d) Elements of good practice are a recent phenomenon in our institution.

Yes ☐   No ☐   V47 ☐ 85

3(e) The notion of quality as "value for money" is superseded by quality as "fitness for purpose" in my institution.

Yes ☐   No ☐   V48 ☐ 86

3(f) Whether your answer is "Yes or No" in 3(e) above please state the reason why you say so.

_____   V49 ☐ 87-88

_____   V50 ☐ 89-90

_____   V51 ☐ 91-92

3(g) The institutional focus on quality is on "improvement" of quality in instructional offerings.

Yes ☐   No ☐   V52 ☐ 93

3(h) The institutional governance structures' focus is on "accountability" and efficiency of operational systems as opposed to the improvement of teaching and learning and research.

Yes ☐   No ☐   V53 ☐ 94

SECTION B:

ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT DIMENSIONS

In completing this section, please read the question or statement and then denote firstly the **extent** to which it is applicable to your institution (according to the scale:"1=not at all; 2=partly;3=mostly;4=fully") and secondly the degree of **importance** which, in your opinion, your institution attaches to the item concerned (according to the scale; "1=not at all; 2=some what important; 3=very important; 4=extremely important"). Once again, you simply tick the appropriate boxes.

		EXTENT					IMPORTANCE					
4.	**QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES**	Not at all	Partly	Mostly	Fully		Not at all	Some what	Very Important	Extremely important		
4(a)	Quality Assurance can take place at various levels of governance in the institution. Please indicate the extent to which Quality Assurance is taking place at the following levels of institutional governance and how important it is considered to be:											
	• Council	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V54	95-96
	• Senate	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V55	97-98
	• Institutional Forum	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V56	99-100
4(b)	Are there any other levels at which QA is undertaken at your institution other than the above? Please indicate the level, extent and importance											
	•	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V57	101-103
	•	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V58	104-106

		EXTENT					IMPORTANCE			
5.	**INSTITUTIONAL MISSION & STRATEGY**	Not at all	Partly	Mostly	Fully		Not at all	Some what	Very Important	Extremely important
5(a)	The reconfiguration of the higher education system necessitates the revision and/or improvement of institutional mission statements. To what extent is the notion of quality as "fitness for purpose" embedded in your mission statement, and how important is it to your institution?									
		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V59 [ ][ ] 107-108
5(b)	To what extent is quality as "value for money" emphasized at your institution, and how important is it considered to be?									
		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V60 [ ][ ] 109-110
5(c)	How extensive is the funding of QA and its mechanisms at your institution, and how important is it considered to be?									
		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V61 [ ][ ] 111-112
5(d)	To what extent are perceptions on academic standards affecting your student intake and how important is this strategic focus to your institution?									
		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V62 [ ][ ] 113-114

9

	6. EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS	EXTENT					IMPORTANCE						
		Not at all	Partly	Mostly	Fully		Not at all	Some what	Very Important	Extremely important			
6(a)	The intensifying Stakeholder scrutiny of governance policies and practices, education and training processes and outcomes, all are leading towards the implementation of formal quality assurance arrangements within higher education institutions. Indicate the extent to which this statement is applicable to your institution and what importance is attached to stakeholder input in your institution												
		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V63		115-116
6(b)	The shrinking resources from the state and the need to "do more with less" have an impact on the core business of the institution. To what extent are the following key areas affected by this, and how important does your institution consider it to be?												
	• Programme offerings	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V64		117-118
	• Information Technology	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V65		119-120
	• Facilities (e.g. laboratory space)	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V66		121-122
	• Management Information Systems	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V67		123-124
6(c)	Would you like to mention any other areas and their extent and importance to your institution												
	•	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V68		125-127
	•	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V69		128-130
	•	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V70		131-133

		EXTENT					IMPORTANCE						
7.	**INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON QUALITY**	Not at all	Partly	Mostly	Fully		Not at all	Some what	Very Important	Extremely important			
7(a)	The proliferation of international private higher education providers and competition among institutions of higher learning is a threat to quality outcomes. To what extent and how important is this statement to the growth of your institution?												
		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V71		134-135
7(b)	Developing principles of good practice and recognition of quality in international education and training is an essential ingredient of your institutional strategic plan.												
		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V72		136-137

		EXTENT					IMPORTANCE						
8.	**TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT**	Not at all	Partly	Mostly	Fully		Not at all	Some what	Very Important	Extremely important			
8(a)	To what extent are the principles of TQM applicable to your institutional governance, and how important is it for higher education in general? (See Glossary for guidance)												
		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	V73		138-139

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SECTION C:

INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS THAT INFLUENCE THE QUALITY PERSPECTIVES

9. Reflect whether the following variables inhibit or promote the implementation of best practice principles at your institution, and then indicate to what extent this occurs (according to the scale: "1=greatly inhibits; 2=partly inhibits; 3=partly promotes; 4= greatly promotes")

Place **X** in the appropriate box.

		Extent						
	CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES	Greatly inhibits	Partly inhibits	Partly promotes	Greatly promotes			
9.1	Internal image of the institution.	1	2	3	4	V74		140
9.2	External image of the institution.	1	2	3	4	V75		141
9.3	The institution's relations with the DoE.	1	2	3	4	V76		142
9.4	The Historical Classification of the institution.	1	2	3	4	V77		143
9.5	The financial viability of the institution.	1	2	3	4	V78		144

		Extent						
	NATIONAL POLICY IMPERATIVES	Greatly inhibits	Partly inhibits	Partly promotes	Greatly promotes			
9.6	Legislative requirements of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997	1	2	3	4	V79		145
9.7	Higher education policy implementation	1	2	3	4	V80		146
9.8	Higher Education Quality Committee Approach to Quality Assurance	1	2	3	4	V81		147
9.9	National Plan on Higher Education (2001)	1	2	3	4	V82		148
9.10	SAQA's requirements through the NQF	1	2	3	4	V83		149

12

	ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS	Greatly inhibits	Partly inhibits	Partly promotes	Greatly promotes			
		Extent						
9.11	Funding Formula for Higher Education	1	2	3	4	V84		150
9.12	Funding of Research in higher education	1	2	3	4	V85		151
9.13	Funding of QA as a new initiative	1	2	3	4	V86		152
9.14	Fiduciary responsibilities of governing Councils	1	2	3	4	V87		153

	INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES	Greatly inhibits	Partly inhibits	Partly promotes	Greatly promotes			
		Extent						
9.15	The extent of trust among stakeholders.	1	2	3	4	V88		154
9.16	The balance between academic and administrative responsibilities to Quality Assurance.	1	2	3	4	V89		155
9.17	Academic stability of the institution.	1	2	3	4	V90		156
9.18	Commitment to Quality Assurance at all levels.	1	2	3	4	V91		157
10.	Would you like to contribute more influences that inhibit or promote the implementation of an effective Quality Assurance system in your institution?							
10.1		1	2	3	4	V92		158-159
10.2		1	2	3	4	V93		160-161
10.3		1	2	3	4	V94		162-163

Thank you for your valuable time!!

GLOSSARY

Emerging-stable institution(s) refer to a stable, strong leadership core, a shared vision of where the institution is moving towards; a slowly expanding student body, and a relatively stable academic and service workforce (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:56).

Uncertain-unstable institution(s) are characterized by conflict amongst different governance structures and a lack of stable authority often accompanied by a loss of students and good staff.

Entrepreneurial-expanding institutions are boosting a strong strategic planning and management expertise and access to a range of resources. They are perceived to be highly responsive to South Africa's changing socio-economic environment.

Traditional-elite institutions largely maintain their pre-1994 character and place strong emphasis on 'excellence', postgraduate teaching and research. Their focus is on the changing student body composition in terms of race and gender.

Total Quality Management (TQM) often referred to as Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in higher education circles. It sees the objective of quality management and quality assurance as part of the process of managing a changing institution/organization culture and environment and using change management to align the mission, culture and working conditions of an organization in pursuit of continued quality improvement (SABS :1999).

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

INTRODUCTION

➢ providing a short but comprehensive background to the research project

➢ establishing a common understanding of the concepts 'institutional governance structures', 'transformation' and 'Quality assurance and promotion'

➢ seeking permission to record the interview on audio-cassette

➢ seeking additional documented information on the institutional approach to quality assurance

➢ requesting the participant/s to complete the information sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

1.   Name:_____

2.   Designation/Position of Participant:_____

3.   Institution:_____

4.   Years of Service/experience in position:_____

5.   Do you have any objections to you name being mentioned in the research report in connection with the information obtained from you?

Yes ☐   No ☐

_____   _____
Signature   Date

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Question:

In your opinion, what role has the transformed institutional governance structures played towards the promotion and assurance of quality at your institution?

Governance (Council)	• Accountability • Fiduciary responsibilities • Policy-making • Strategic planning • Allocation of scarce resources
Governance (Senate)	• Maintenance of academic standards • Improvements/developmental approach to quality • International competitiveness of academic programmes • "Value for money" for students and other customers
Quality Focus:	- Exceptional - Perfection/Consistency - Value for money - Fitness for Purpose/fitness of Purpose - Transformation

Take note whether participant/s address the following matters:

- Council   > its composition, functions and contribution to quality promotion, management and assurance

- Senate   > its composition, functions and contribution to quality promotion management and assurance

- Institutional Forum   > its composition, functions (advisory to Council) and contribution (if any) to issues of quality institution-wide

- Any other institutional structures and their contribution to Quality assurance.

- Forces influencing Quality Assurance during this period of the implementation of the legislative (systemic and institutional) requirements, e.g. funding, government (CHE/HEQC), internationalisation, competition with other providers (public and private).

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