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**Abstract**

Quality assurance codes and guidelines for systems of higher education change frequently and sometimes rapidly and dramatically. More often changes are gradual and incremental. This paper examines types of change to these codes and guidelines and uses strategic management theory to outline three modes of development and change. An example of gradual change, sometimes referred to as 'logical incrementalism' or 'adding bells and whistles' is outlined from Oman. A contrasting example of discontinuous change known as 'emergent strategy' or 'code by catastrophe' is used from Australia. Elements of a third 'co-participative' model incorporating stakeholder and community input alongside technical knowledge are becoming more frequent. An ideal model is proposed drawing from the best aspects of logical incrementalism and co-participative development. This model can be applied to changes in codes, guidelines and standards in multiple systems and sectors.

(HRK / Abstract übernommen)