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**Abstract**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federation of seven autonomous emirates that follow different economic models. There is a process for quality assurance at the federal level, however, each emirate takes its own approach to assure the quality of its institutions. This has resulted in different procedures and varying levels of oversight and scrutiny of quality. Since the majority of higher education providers in the UAE are market-driven, this poses the challenge of maintaining the quality of education in those institutions. This study explores how well quality assurance systems support the quality of commercial higher education institutions using two research methods: semi-structured interviews with 38 stakeholders to investigate their perceptions of the quality assurance processes in the UAE; and focus group discussions with 161 students to collect their views of the quality of education in the commercialised institutions. The research confirms earlier findings that quality of education is a function of quality assurance processes. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)