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**Author**

HUITEMA, Dave

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**Abstract**

This article examines parallel developments in the fields of quality assurance in higher education and in environmental policy. Starting from empirically grounded analytical frameworks for the two fields separately, Fischer's framework of policy argumentation is overlaid on both to gain deeper understanding of underlying similarities and contrasts. We argue that quality management in the field of higher education faces choices already addressed in environmental quality assurance. In the light of these practical and theoretical lessons, the relative success with higher education quality assurance may be less of a reason for optimism. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)