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**Abstract**

Accreditation systems in higher education are widespread both in the USA and in Europe. However, numerous reservations have appeared in the literature about whether these systems can comprehend and represent the quality of university courses. This study sets out to contribute to this debate by discussing whether the results of the recent university teaching accreditation system in Italy are influenced by the characteristics of degree programmes, their performance, and the characteristics of incoming students. Whilst addressing this research question, this paper intends above all to give a methodological contribution by proposing an evidence-based approach that tackles the limits found in the literature in relation to university accreditation and quality assurance. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)