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**Abstract**

Expanded and increasingly diversified systems of higher education are generally differentiated vertically and/or horizontally. National quality management systems attempt to identify both kinds of differences in quality and standards across their higher education systems. But different quality management systems and processes can pose different questions about such differences and provide different answers. In so doing, they can change what is regarded as important in higher education. Institutions respond to the perceived requirements of quality management with either change and innovation or with compliance and conformity. Institutional policies may change. Cultures of quality can be either strengthened or weakened. Impacts on quality differ, with unintended impacts often more significant than the intended ones..(HRK / Abstract übernommen)