

What Were the Strong and Weak Points Emanating from the Management of Quality Assurance in the Former Technikons?

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ABSTRACT The notion of quality is as old as the university itself and, to-date, all universities aver to be exercising quality in some form or other. However, in reality, most universities demonstrate aspects of good practice in some sections, but it is quite difficult to practise them across the entire institution. The study sets out to explore whether internal quality assurance provided these institutions with insights pertaining to their strong and weak points and, consequently, gaining a good understanding of what is needed to be done in the institutions to promote and assure quality. The paper did use historical research that focuses exclusively on the past with regard to quality assurance at universities of technology. The target population were all Universities of Technology in the Republic of South Africa. The study decided to select a sample of six Quality Assurance Managers from Universities of Technology selected on the basis of random sampling based on Provincial representations. An interview was used as the main data collection instrument. The study reveals that, in some universities little was done in promoting Quality Assurance. The researcher learnt of institutions' intentions and their current initiatives to align their missions with the needs of the region. Nevertheless, after interviewing the quality assurance manager of an institution, the researcher concluded that the awareness of the Missions and their implications for the three core functions was not consistent throughout the institution. Overall, there was ongoing attention given to promoting, supporting and understanding the Mission, in each institution, and its realisation in the core areas of teaching and learning, research and community engagement.