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Regionalisation and Its Impact on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Author(s)
Ephraim Mhlanga

ABSTRACT
In many parts of the world, higher education is still predominantly shaped at national level, and tends not only to reflect but also to underscore the specific traditions and circumstances of individual countries (Enders, J. 2002:1). As a result, it has been mainly assessed in the context of national systems with very little attention being paid to its international dimension. In Southern Africa, this trend has largely been due to the nature of relationship that prevails between higher education and the nation state. This trend has started changing as globalisation and internationalisation factors exert more and more influence on the shaping of the institution of a university. This article argues that in Southern Africa, globalisation manifests itself through regionalisation, a process that has ushered in standardisation of quality assurance systems; a new managerialism in the management of higher education institutions; marketisation and commodification of knowledge; changing forms of state-university relationships; greater emphasis on efficiency, cost saving and income-generating discourse; the forging of university-private sector partnerships; and increasing staff and student mobility in the region and on the continent. The article pursues these themes and shows how they impact on the quality of delivery of three case universities in Southern Africa.

KEYWORDS

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