Quality Management in Higher Education
The principles of quality management were originally developed in the USA in the nineteen-fifties, were adopted with significant worldwide commercial success by the manufacturing sector in Japan in the nineteen-sixties and, as a consequence, were adopted by manufacturers in the USA during the nineteen-seventies and eighties (Sallis, 1996; Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003; Lagrosen, Hashemi and Leitner, 2004; Travers, 2007). Following their success in the manufacturing industries, quality management systems have since been adopted globally across many other sectors including government services, the military, community services, health and education.

The higher education sector at both government and institution level has been progressively introducing quality management systems over the last two decades (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003; Haug, 2003; Materu, 2007; Brookes and Becket, 2007), most notably in the USA and Europe, but also in the Middle and Near East, Africa, China, South East Asia, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. This has led to a significant level of debate within institutions and between academics on the relevance of such systems to higher education. Opponents have focused on concerns about restrictions to academic freedoms, risk averse processes that may stifle innovation and the emergence of managerialism, or the burgeoning of administrative control, whereas proponents have pointed to the benefits of effective change management, continuous improvement cycles, higher academic standards, increased staff and student satisfaction and forward planning (see the commentaries by Harvey and Green, 1993; Biggs, 2001; Lomas, 2001; Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2002; Vidovich, 2002; Hodson and Thomas, 2003; Cruikshank, 2003; Chua, 2004; Vidovich, 2004; Hoecht, 2006; Mizikaci, 2009; Williams, 2009; Reid, 2009).

Although the debate has been vigorous amongst and within providers, governments have almost universally embraced quality management as a regulatory tool for higher education provision in their jurisdictions. Twenty-nine national higher education quality regulatory agencies have been established in Europe and the UK alone over the last decade\(^1\). Similar agencies have been established in nearly every country that has higher education providers. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) was established by the Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in March 2000\(^2\).

The proliferation of national quality agencies is attributed to the changes worldwide in the universities in the nineteen-eighties and nineties from elitist institutions to providers of mass education (Eriksen, 1995; Lomas, 2001; Chevallier, 2002; Randall, 2002; Naidoo, 2003; Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003; Williams, 2009). This led to a large increase in student numbers (which nearly doubled in the UK in the nineties, for example), significant changes to student cohorts and the requirement from governments that higher education providers be more accountable for the quality of the education offered and the outcomes for students (Campbell and Wende, 2000; Vidovich, 2002 and

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1 European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education: [http://www.enqa.eu/](http://www.enqa.eu/)
2 Australian Universities Quality Agency: [http://www.auqa.edu.au/](http://www.auqa.edu.au/)
National quality agencies continue to progressively introduce regulatory frameworks that require higher education providers to more extensively embed quality management principles in their systems. The future for higher education worldwide includes increased regulation through external assessment processes that target institutional quality management systems.

In Australia, the national regulator audits the quality systems of higher education providers. In 2005, UTAS underwent its first national quality audit. One of the key recommendations from the audit report was that UTAS should develop an articulated quality system.

The debate on whether quality management systems are suitable for higher education providers, in Australia or elsewhere with national regulation of the sector, has therefore become moot to the extent that they are here to stay for the foreseeable future. Rather, the central question for providers is how best to develop such a system (Yorke, 1999; Newman and Courturier, 2002; Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003; Hodson and Thomas, 2003; Cruikshank, 2003; Hoecht, 2006).

To see information on the quality system at UTAS go to
http://www.dvc.utas.edu.au/quality

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