

5. How does governance relate to quality assurance?

The study of quality is a discipline in its own right, and there are numerous definitions of quality, quality assurance, quality management, audits and controls.

In education and training quality assurance focuses on the improvement of inputs (the quality of provision), the outputs (the achievements of the learners), and the monitoring and evaluation of these against indicators and targets. The agencies responsible for quality assurance (e.g. SAQA, Department of Education, Umalusi, the CHE, the SETA ETQAs) set up their own criteria for accreditation or recognition of the bodies or education and training providers. Generally, these criteria include requirements relating to governance of the organization, to ensure both compliance with legislation and financial accountability.

Below is a fairly typical listing of categories of criteria used in quality assurance, illustrating the role of governance.

Reporting to a quality assurance body is required on:

- Leadership, governance and strategic planning
- Policies and procedures
- Monitoring, evaluation and review
- Financial resources
- Management information system and reporting
- Staff establishment
- Operations, administration and delivery

Some educational institutions may aspire to achieving a specific Quality Management System meeting international standards such as ISO 9001:2000 or Total Quality, or one focusing on human resources such as Investors in People. These provide an institutional context, focusing on all aspects of quality management, into which quality assurance policies and processes for different institutional functions should be integrated. The role of governance would again be specified in relation to oversight of all the institutional functions and structures.

[Answer to FAQ 5, The NQF and Strategic Governance, the NQF Gateway]