

Academic Planning vs. Quality Assurance: Unravelling the Thin Line in Higher Education

Dr. Luvuyo Ndawule

North West University, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The intersection between academic planning and quality assurance in higher education represents a critical yet often overlooked area of study. This manuscript explores the nuanced relationship between the two, focusing on their overlapping roles in shaping institutional success. Anchored within the context of global higher education systems, the study seeks to unravel the "thin line" where innovation and strategic foresight in academic planning converge with compliance-driven and evaluative processes of quality assurance.

The primary aim of this study is to broaden understanding of this intersection to foster better alignment between these domains. Specifically, it addresses the research question: To what extent can academic planning and quality assurance be strategically integrated to enhance institutional effectiveness? Grounded in systems theory, which emphasizes the interdependent nature of organizational components, this study underscores the need for holistic approaches in higher education administration.

The research employs a desktop methodology, synthesizing existing literature, case studies, and policy frameworks from various higher education systems. By leveraging secondary data, the study critically examines the challenges and opportunities inherent in balancing innovation and standards. Ethical considerations include ensuring accurate representation of data and maintaining objectivity in analysis.

The findings hold significant value for academic leaders, policymakers, and quality assurance practitioners. By bridging conceptual gaps, this study contributes to the discourse on strategic integration, offering actionable recommendations for institutions aiming to align academic planning and quality assurance. Ultimately, it strives to enhance the quality of education and accountability in higher education worldwide.

Keywords: Academic Planning, Quality Assurance, Higher Education, Integration, Institutional Effectiveness