CHAPTER 2
THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets the background for this study and gives a very concise summary of the development and implementation of quality assurance systems on international, national and institutional levels. It explains the rationale for the development of a quality assurance system for higher education in the new dispensation of higher education and offers a framework to understand the initiatives on national and institutional levels with regard to quality management in the new democratic South Africa.

Higher education developed on international level from a system designed for the elite to that of a more diverse student body. This is a phenomenon that is referred to as the "massification of higher-education" (Barrow 1999:27). Massification of higher education is an international tendency. There is a growing demand for people to enhance their employment potential by means of education (Massy, 1996:16). The combined efforts of institutions of higher learning and governments led to the massification of education. There is globally a tendency in national policies of the widening of participation and therefore of promoting social inclusion and access to higher education (Ketteridge, Marshall & Fry, 2002:33). Enrolments in higher education in the twenty-first century increased, according to research of UNESCO, from 72 million in 1999 to 133 million in 2004 (Sanyal & Martin, 2007:3). Internationally enrolments in higher education doubled in these five years from 41.1 million to 99.1 million. This massive increase is a result of the high social demand, and the increasing social interest of society in higher education (Vroeijenstijn, 1995:2), as well as an expansion of economic need for a highly educated workforce (Sanyall & Martin, 2007:3). Massification and the demands of commerce and industry contribute to the "pollution" of universities as the elite institutions of knowledge production (Morley, 2003:5).

In the last decades of the 20th century there was an explosion in the amount of discussions about knowledge in many variations such as knowledge work, knowledge-based organisations, and the knowledge economy (Vat, 2003:1085; Ketteridge et al., 2002:18-20). Sanyall and Martin (2007) refer to the global increase in social and economic demand for higher education as a result of the need of citizens to be part of the emerging knowledge
society, the fact that higher education ensures to a certain extent better job opportunities, the
refers to knowledge as utilitarian and unstable, disposable, transferable and just-in-time,
which reminds of Lyotard’s view of knowledge as a narrative due to the fact that it changes
so rapidly (Macey, 2001: 260). Knowledge or “intellectual capital” is a key element of social
and economic development. It is a tendency in the United Kingdom (UK) and Europe that
governments view higher education institutions as instruments for the delivery of public policy
and therefore set visions for a knowledge-based economy. Tony Blair stated in 1998 that the
emphasis in the UK is on how well the government succeeds in exploiting the intellectual
property and skills of the country by means of investments in education, science and the
creation of a culture for enterprise (Ketteridge et al.,2002:18).

The concept “mass higher education” has its origin as early as the nineteen fifty's
(Vroeijenstijn, 1995:2). The global massification of higher education is a result of the
increase in economic need for skills such as exploratory skills to explore natural and physical
sources, exploitation skills to convert these resources into consumable goods and services,
management skills to manage the exploration, production and distribution of goods and
services, negotiation skills to establish fair work rules, a reward system and internal and
external terms of trade, conservation skills to sustain development of future generations and
moral and ethical skills (Sanyall & Martin, 2007:4).

Governments realise that the quality of higher education institutions and programmes is
fundamental to the growth and development of countries. Therefore, the majority of
countries, including South Africa, established national systems for the assessment of quality
in higher education. These initiatives are usually sponsored by a government of a country,
“even if the national quality agencies so formed generally possess a considerable degree of
operational autonomy and mainly use a form of peer review as their assessment method”
(Brennan & Shah, 2000: 331).

According to Ratcliff (1997:4) “it is presumed that the greater the individual's education and
intellectual ability, the more prepared he or she is to provide specific expertise or leadership
to the society”. Countries that were able to “manage and sustain high levels of economic
growth with significant improvements in the living standards of the masses of their
populations are those which have given priority to excellent education and training” (CHE,
2004a:14). Governments recognise the value of encouraging the development of a
population with tertiary qualifications, and therefore increase pressure on institutions of
higher learning to play a constructive role in economic growth (Barrow, 1999:27,
Woodhouse, 1995:16). Massification and the notion of accessibility of higher education in
the South African post-apartheid context create a situation of an ever larger group of students who are not all necessarily prepared for higher education, due to a poor schooling system and the legacy of apartheid with regard to black education.

The call for evaluation of the quality of institutions of higher learning was a worldwide phenomenon and concept in the nineties. The majority of countries established quality assurance systems and procedures that are comparable with practices in industry. Traditional informal self-regulation of institutions of higher learning is replaced by external accountability procedures (Van Damme, 2000:10).

Governments give greater discretionary authority to individual institutions in exchange for increased evidence of the efficiency and efficacy of institutional performance (Ratcliff, 1997:25). In South Africa, the HEQC promises that they will grant self-evaluation status to institutions that prove that they have efficient quality management systems in place (CHE, 2004d:22). Globally a “quality gap” developed as a result of the governments’ initiatives to increase the numbers of student enrolment and an international tendency of continuous decrease in investments, therefore institutions of higher learning have to do more with less money (Vroeijenstijn, 1995:3). According to Clark (1998: xvi) the institutional-environment relationship is characterised by a deepening asymmetry between environmental demand and institutional capacity support. Higher education is a key factor for the social and economical enhancement of a country and is therefore an important “partner” for any government. Du Pré (2004:12) reflects in this regard from a South African university and post-apartheid higher education context that “now, more than ever, people see education as their hope for leading meaningful and fulfilling lives. One’s level of education has always been a primary determinant of one’s economic well-being”.

The economic viability of a country depends to a large extent on the ability of its higher education sector to prepare students that are able to compete in the global village by producing goods and by rendering services of international standards. This is why governments all over the globe are willing to commit a large percentage of public funds to higher education. With increased funds comes an “increased concern on the part of government to be reassured on two counts. First, is the money being spent well, i.e. are the institutions of higher education operating efficiently? Second, are they producing the required graduates to society, i.e. in the government’s terms, are they achieving the desired quality?” (Woodhouse, 1995:16). This chapter will focus on higher education and the quest for quality assurance with special reference to South Africa in a post-apartheid era.
South Africa has a history that is characterised by socio-cultural divisions along race and class lines. The higher education system of the country was created by its colonial history and formed by the conflict between nationalism of both Afrikaners and the British and forged against racial lines between whites and blacks (Subotzky, 2008:1). “Separateness” or “apartheid” in Afrikaans, was a political system of racial segregation that was enforced by the ruling National Party between 1948 and 1994. The creation of apartheid was partially a legacy of the history of South Africa under the Dutch government as early as the 17th century at the Cape of Good Hope by means of the introduction of “pass laws” (Muller, 1984:92). British colonialism in South Africa introduced officially a system of pass laws in the nineteenth century (Cape Colony and Natal). The system of legitimised racism and white nationalism started when South Africa gained self-governance as a dominion within the British Empire in 1948. This was in turn the breeding ground of local support for an armed resistance struggle. The apartheid government responded to a national armed resistance by mainly oppressed blacks through the banning of the “liberal” political opposition of organisations such as the African National Congress, the Black Consciousness Movement, the Azanian People’s Organisation, the Pan African Congress and the United Democratic Front.

Many members of these anti-apartheid movements were detained without trial, tortured or went into exile. Under the apartheid government, blacks became citizens of one of the ten homelands (so-called “Bantustans”). The homelands were created in the territory of Black Reserves that were established during the British Empire period. The homeland system was a strategy of the National Party to disenfranchise blacks to stay in “white” areas by restricting their voting rights to the Bantustans. The Bantustans were the least economically-productive areas of the country. The government succeeded in segregating black education, medical care and other public services with inferior standards. Blacks were prepared for life as members of a labouring class.

Politics played a major role in the history of universities in South Africa especially after the extension of the University Act of 1959. Racially segregated universities were established as a result of the Act. The rationale for the implementation of the Act was to bar the entry of black students into “white universities”, which prepared the way for the establishment of the Universities Durban-Westville, Western Cape, Zululand and The North. The white universities were relatively small during the heydays of apartheid. In 1960 only 5000 of a
total of 62 000 were non-white students. During the peak of apartheid, black universities were constructed in the Bantustans or the so-called “self-governing states”, namely in the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (the TBVC states). During the apartheid regime, ten historically black universities and fifteen technikons (now Universities of Technology) were established (Technikons became Universities of Technology in October 2003). Seven of the fifteen technikons were historically white institutions, one was established for distance education and the rest were historically black institutions (Du Pré, 2004: ix).

Non-government organisations (NGOs) were instrumental in demanding the transformation of education since the mid 1970s. The 1970s was a period of national protest on national level at mainly historically disadvantaged institutions of higher learning. Apartheid was dismantled during the period of 1990 to 1993. A period of series of negotiations followed, culminating in elections in 1994, after which the African National Congress (ANC) became the new ruling party. After the country’s first historical democratic elections, the new ANC government focused on economic development by means of reconstructing the social system of the country (CHE, 2004a:14). In the post-apartheid South Africa the right to education is enshrined in the Bill of Rights, not only for children, but also for adults (South Africa Education, 2008:1).

2.2.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The University of the Cape of Good Hope was the first university that was established in Cape Town in 1873, followed by the establishment of the South African College (1829) in Cape Town and the Victoria College (1865) in Stellenbosch. The following table is a concise chronological illustration of the establishment of universities in South Africa:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR ESTABLISHED</th>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>University of Good Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>South African College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Victoria College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>School of Mines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Rhodes University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>South African Native College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>South African College changed its name to the University of Cape Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>University of Good Hope changed its name to University of South Africa - UNISA (a federal university with a number of university colleges)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Victoria College changed its name to University of Stellenbosch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>School of Mines changed its name to the University of the Witwatersrand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>UNISA's university colleges became full-fledged universities (Universities of Pretoria, Free State, Potchefstroom, Natal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>South African Native College changed its name to the University of Fort Hare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 1959</td>
<td>University Durban-Westville, Western Cape, Zululand and The North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-sixties to mid-eighties</td>
<td>University of Port Elizabeth, Rand Afrikaans University, Vista and the Medical University of South Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The traditionally “white” South African higher education institutions have a long tradition of being concerned that their graduates have high quality qualifications. There is such evidence that goes back to the first university colleges of graduates that commenced with great success their higher degree studies at universities abroad such as the United Kingdom (Smout & Stephenson, 2001:2). Despite the political isolation that South Africa experienced during the apartheid era, academics were free to attend international conferences and to sign contracts with regard to research projects with universities abroad. These contacts ensured that South Africans stayed abreast of modern trends and standards (Smout & Stephenson, 2001:2). These institutions were used to the traditional approaches to quality assurance i.e. implementing the good practice of peer reviews (nationally and internationally) of e.g. examination papers and post graduate research.

New quality assurance processes on national level were introduced at the beginning of the 1990s. The implementation of the national processes for quality assurance was a relatively new concept for the majority of universities in South Africa. It was an ever greater challenge to the black or disadvantaged institutions that were established within the apartheid era (Noruwana, 1997:63-73). As already mentioned above, there is no doubt that a wide variety of quality levels exists within institutions of higher learning. It is also a fact that the weakest institutions in the country produced academically poor graduates. Many historically advantaged institutions (historically white) were well-established institutions as a result of significant resources to devote to quality assurance initiatives during the apartheid era in comparison with the historically disadvantaged (historically black) institutions. The situation with regard to the historically black institutions was mainly a result of the black education
system. Therefore, the new democratic government introduced initiatives with regard to quality assurance on national level in order to solve the quality problem. The latter was a legacy of a fragmented education system of the apartheid era which necessitated transformation.

2.3 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT:
THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

During the apartheid years, the administration of education of blacks was decentralised into regions of self-governing territories and since 1976 into the TBVC states or Bantustans (CHE, 2004a:22). The TBVC governments were responsible for education of blacks at all levels, including higher learning. The establishment of higher education institutions for blacks was promulgated through the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, which forms part of the strategy of the apartheid government to promote "Bantu self-government". As a result of the implementation of this act, eleven institutions had been established by 1988. The Minister of Education and Training in the Republic of South Africa was responsible for all African education. The administrative responsibility for Coloured and Indian education changed constantly between 1910 and 1983 between provincial and central departments. According to the 1983 Constitution, Coloured education was the responsibility of the Minister of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Representatives. Indian education was the responsibility of the Minister of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Delegates.

With regard to the education of whites, prior to 1984, the provincial departments provided all education except for the education that is defined as "higher education" (technical colleges, universities and technikons, which form part of the responsibility of the Department of National Education). The 1983 Constitution divided parliament into three "chambers", each with representatives for Whites, Coloureds and Indians. The Constitution drew a distinction between "own" and "general" affairs. "Own" affairs refer to matters that are specific to the values and culture of a specific ethnic group. "Education became an "own affair" for all groups" (CHE, 2004a:23).

Higher education during the apartheid era in South Africa was therefore fragmented; institutions of higher learning were designated for a specific race group, and therefore not accessible for students of a different ethnical group. A student was only permitted to study at
a different race institution of higher learning if his or her application to the particular administering government of that institution was successful. The racial basis on which the fragmented higher education system was established and developed, led to differentiation with regard to governance and funding. The historically black institutions in the apartheid era were "meant to be inferior to the established universities for whites". As already mentioned, the quality of the programmes offered at these black institutions was always questionable (Noruwana, 1997:64).

The higher education landscape was characterised with a division between "institutional types". As mentioned above, there were three "types" of institutions of higher learning: universities, technikons and colleges. Universities in the apartheid era were corporations that were founded by an act of Parliament. This means that their functions could be terminated and be prescribed by government. In policy terms, universities were independent and separate spheres with relation to the state or any other spheres. The government could therefore not interfere in the universities' affairs (CHE, 2004a:23). From the previous colleges of advanced technical education (CATEs), the technikon sector emerged. Following the investigation of the training of engineering technicians in 1978, it was recommended by the Goode Committee that technikons should train technologists and technicians. This was a function similar to but separate from the role of universities. Practical training was at the centre of technikon programmes. Science and knowledge development was still the responsibility of universities during this era, while the application of technology was the intellectual sphere of technikons. During the 1980s and 1990s, each type of institution of higher learning in South Africa had its own qualification structure. Technikons were not allowed to offer degrees prior to 1993. In comparison with universities, technikons did not enjoy an independent sphere. They were subjected to central control with regard to their curricula, certification and examinations. The higher education system in South Africa during the apartheid era was therefore fragmented and to a great extent uncoordinated.

The first initiatives for the development of a post-apartheid era of higher education started in the early 1990s. Three initiatives during this period formed the basis of the new national education policy, i.e. the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), the Union of Democratic University Staff Development (UDUSA) and the Centre for Education Policy Development. NGO resistance with regard to the education situation produced the above-mentioned NEPI report in 1992. The dismantling of apartheid that was announced by President De Klerk, was ignored by institutions of higher learning until the newly elected government established the National Commission of Higher Education (Smout & Stephenson, 2004:3). The ANC government appointed the commission with the task to
submit recommendations with regard to higher education. The five principles for higher education that were emphasised by the above-mentioned three initiatives were democracy, redress, non-sexism, non-racialism, and a unitary system (CHE, 2004a:24). In a global knowledge-driven economy, the new government had to redress the inequalities that existed in the post-apartheid higher education system. The key concepts that underpin the higher education policy of 1994 are equity, efficiency and effectiveness.

2.3.1 THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (NCHE)

The NCHE was established by the end of 1994. As already mentioned, quality of programmes that were offered at institutions of higher learning in South Africa became priority on the new government’s political and educational agenda. This was also the tendency on international level (Lategan, 1997: 86). In September 1996 the NCHE submitted a report for a transformed higher education system based on the following three pillars:

- Increased participation (a change from an elite higher education system to a mass higher education system and the establishment of a single higher education system)
- Greater responsiveness (ensuring that higher education is responsive to its social context which implies a change with regard to its delivery modes, research and to the needs of the market and civil society)
- Increased cooperation and partnerships (cooperative governance with the government in a supervisory role as opposed to controlling or interference, and linkages between institutions of higher learning and civil society).

The initiatives of increased participation (the process of massification) led to the development of a single higher education system as the only manner in which the inequities, ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the apartheid system could be eradicated (CHE, 2004a:25). For the purpose of this study it is important to note that the NCHE supported at this stage the establishment of a policy of quality assurance and promotion within a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This was in order to prevent the effects of massification on academic standards, as well as combating the differences in quality in the higher education sector. The development of a national policy on quality assurance would also ensure the steering of quality improvements in the higher education system.
According to Noruwana (1997:64), "with the advent of the post-apartheid democratic government...direct focus was placed on quality promotion and quality assurance in higher education", which was strengthened by the recommendations of the NCHE in 1996 as well as the White Paper on Higher Education (SA, 1997b). By 1997, institutions of higher learning in South Africa had had to adapt to crucial change with regard to their institutional visions and missions. Institutional missions and values must be consistent with the 1997 White Paper on higher education transformation (SA,1997a). This had an impact on many institutions' ideologies (Bunting, 2002:93).

2.3.2 THE WHITE PAPER ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The White Paper on Higher Education (SA, 1997b) set out policy for sustaining the transformation of the higher education process. The White Paper supports the development of a programme-based higher education system that is funded and governed as a single system. In order to eradicate the legacy of the apartheid higher education system, the White Paper's sentiments concur with the NCHE principles as mentioned above i.e. equity and redress, democratisation, effectiveness, efficiency, development, quality, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability. The White Paper supports a goal-oriented, performance-related funding system that aligns resource allocation to policy goals and objectives.

The new government introduced a cooperative governance system where government and institutions of higher learning act as partners in the transformation of higher education in the post-apartheid era. The system of cooperative governance is linked to the notion of accountability. It implies that the new government has a steering and coordinating role to play in higher education while institutions of higher learning have the authority over their resources but are held publicly accountable. The White Paper advocated the establishment of the Council of Higher Education (CHE) as a single body with policy, as well as quality assurance functions.

The National Plan for Higher Education was published in 2001. The National Plan was developed within a period of four years after the White Paper. During this period, some of the historically advantaged institutions (HAIs) embarked on entrepreneurial activities and positioned themselves advantageously by means of the introduction of initiatives such as telematic education through distance education, partnerships with private providers, etc. The
majority of HAI's experienced during this period a decrease in enrolment in comparison with the historically black universities (HBUs or previously disadvantaged institutions). It seems that the majority of management of the HDIs initially had no serious concerns with outstanding payments of students due to a perception that a national redress funding initiative would be implemented. When this did not happen, the majority of HDIs was facing serious risks with regard to their sustainability (Bunting, 2002:82). A perception amongst the public that the quality of teaching and learning and research is of a better quality at HAI's and the right of students to choose their own institution for higher learning contributed to the increased enrolments at HAI's in South Africa. This scenario prompted the Minister of Education to intervene by seeking advice from the CHE with regard to the "size and shape" of the higher education sector. These initiatives led to proposals on institutional mergers for implementation during the period of 2004 - 2005. Institutional restructuring took place after the announcement of the Minister's initiatives in October 2003. The following table shows the new names of the merged universities:

**TABLE 2:** Example of the merging of some of the institutions of higher learning in South Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MERGING INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING</th>
<th>NEW NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Potchefstroom, University North West and Vista</td>
<td>North West University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pretoria and the Mamelodi campus of Vista</td>
<td>Pretoria (retained its name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNISA, Vista Distance Education</td>
<td>UNISA (retained its name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technikons Pretoria, North West and Northern Gauteng</td>
<td>Tshwane University of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technikon Witwatersrand, Soweto and East campuses of Vista University and Rand Afrikaans University</td>
<td>University of Johannesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa), University of the North</td>
<td>University of Limpopo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth Technikon, Port Elizabeth campus of Vista</td>
<td>Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Transkei, Border Technikon</td>
<td>Eastern Cape University of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East London campus of Rhodes University, Fort Hare</td>
<td>Fort Hare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHAPTER 2
THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR
2.4 AUTONOMY, ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE QUEST FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

As already mentioned, the concept of “quality” in higher education is not new, not on international level and not even during the apartheid era. “It has always been part of academic tradition” (Vroeijenstijn, 1995:2). Globally the emphasis was placed upon quality assurance in higher education since 1985. According to Vroeijenstijn (1995:2-3) the following factors globally placed attention on quality assurance in higher education:

- Mass education since the 1950s;
- the changed relationship between higher education and society;
- a “quality gap” that is created by the situation of governments’ demand of increasing student enrolments and simultaneously a continuous process of decreasing of investments (a situation of “do more with less money”);
- international student exchanges (stakeholders demand insight and assurance with regard to the quality of higher education on international level); and
- the international tendency of governments that promise more autonomy to higher education institutions but requiring in exchange quality assurance.

Arising from these contributing factors is the governmental definition of the concept quality in higher education that can be described as “value for money” and of ensuring accountability (Lategan, 1997:86). This “relationship” between institutions of higher learning and governments creates global concerns amongst higher education institutions with regard to their degree of “autonomy” and “academic freedom”. Many academics are sceptic with regard to quality assurance initiatives because they believe it could harm their autonomy (Burke, 2005:20., Morley, 2003:53-57). Hall (2006:370) makes a distinction between academic freedom and its relationship to institutional autonomy within the South African higher education context by referring to the “classic” and the “contextual” views. Hall argues that the classic interpretation embraces the view that academic freedom is the institutional form of human rights. The concept ‘academic freedom’ originated from a rather modernistic
view that teachers and students are dedicated to search for “the truth”. Academic freedom claims freedom from any external interference (Hall, 2006:371). The apartheid government assailed to a great extent the principle of academic freedom.

Traditionally, academic freedom and autonomy are a given to institutions of higher learning. They are traditionally highly conservative about their own affairs (Ferreira, 2003:39). Globally it is the tradition that faculties of universities are usually at the centre of the enterprise and largely left to their own devices. They rule largely to consensus and subscribe to the view that colleagues should not raise controversial matters that may be divisive (Ferreira, 2003:39). This situation also unfortunately contributes to the preservation of the status quo. As an example of the traditional autonomy of universities with regard to quality, it is usually the faculty and the administrators of an institution of higher learning that are responsible for the quality of work, for the maintenance and enhancement of quality. It rests on internal procedures for discovering and correcting deficiencies and a system of external audits of its procedures for correcting weaknesses (Graham, et al., 1995:15).

The degree of autonomy of universities varies from country to country. In the United Kingdom, universities have had a high degree of autonomy (Geall et al., 1997:186), in countries such as the Netherlands the government moved away from a strategy of detailed planning and control (steering) to initiatives that will give universities more autonomy. According to Vroeijenstijn (1995:5) the initiatives of the Netherlands contribute to a large extent to the enhancement of quality of higher education. This is also characteristic of European education, where governments moved away from the state-directed system of governance to a state-supervisory form of governance, affording institutions more freedom but still subjected to demonstrating institutional accountability (Van der Westhuizen & Fourie, 2002:5). In the United States of America the influence of government steering is limited; a strong notion of market and competition exists. Institutions in the USA have to develop their own processes of quality assurance by means of accreditation and systematic reviews of programmes (Van der Westhuizen & Fourie, 2002:5; Liston, 1999:22-26).

In South Africa the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA) raised concerns regarding the implementation of the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997, as it limits to a great extent the autonomy of public institutions (Ferreira, 2003:56). In the African context self-regulation and autonomy should be viewed as “restricted autonomy”. The research of Maassen and Van Vught (1989) reveals the same tendency in the Netherlands. Like countries such as the Netherlands (Vroeijenstijn, 1995:5), and Australia (Van der Westhuizen & Fourie, 2002:13-14), the new South African government chose a national quality assurance system of review committees to be organised by the Higher
The Education Quality Committee (HEQC). The HEQC is an independent sub-committee of the Council of Higher Education (CHE). The HEQC has the responsibility to steer the higher education system in the new dispensation of higher education in South Africa towards the achievement of the government’s transformation agenda (Botha, 2005:49).

2.5 CONCLUSION

Africa is in the process of “emerging” from the years of isolation and economic stagnation and enters the global economic village that is characterised by competitiveness (Meyer, 1996:5). South Africa, like the majority of countries all over the globe, is competing to deliver services on time, at any location and at a competitive price (Champy & Nohria, 1996: xiv). Noruwana (1997:73) states that “if South African universities do not want to be left far behind in the free market of knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination, they have no choice but to engage in self-evaluation and quality assurance”, which is imperative for the transformation process to which post-apartheid South Africa commits itself.

The higher education system in South Africa went through dramatic and radical transformation processes. The changes are characterised by a new National Qualifications Framework, a Green and White Paper on Higher Education that define the social and academic role of universities, a change from a monoculture university that is based on language and race to a multicultural university in which the emphasis is on unity within diversity, the massification of higher education, increased access to universities by former disadvantaged groups, a new relationship between universities and government by means of a self-regulation system and the emphasis on social and human development through university programmes. The South African National Plan for Higher Education of 2001 set a national challenge to increase the participation rate in higher education from 15% to 20% within ten years, which has an enormous impact on the education system (Du Pré, 2004: 11). The new developments also have a major effect on the quality activities (quality promotion and assurance) of the new university system. The following two chapters deal with the notion of quality management in higher education with special reference to the integration of planning and resource allocation.