

CHAPTER 3: THE NATURE OF THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION

3.1 ORIENTATION

Governments generally have begun to have a renewed interest in seeing an expansion in higher education systems. Being both capital and labour intensive, higher education is a relatively high-cost service and one means of funding the expansion is through a diminishing unit cost. Being pulled in the directions of both expansion and the reduction of cost, doubts about the quality of the system's products emerge.

Quality has become a key word in the public debate about higher education in South Africa. Quality assurance is irrevocably on the agendas of South African Higher Educational Institutions. In terms of the Constitution (Schedule 4 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996) tertiary education is a national competence.

The number of institutions offering teacher education is considerable. There is, however, no systematic internal quality assurance systems pertaining to these institutions. Stetar (1996:11) advocates that far too much emphasis is placed on the regulatory elements of the external sphere. However, external accreditation and quality assurance efforts are almost never capable of evaluating teaching and research. External aspects of quality assurance are merely exercises designed to convince outsiders that the institution deserves support. Internal quality assurance systems are designed to discover the key processes at work in an institution and how they can be improved.

Strydom (1996:3) states real, enduring quality resides in the institution's own quality assurance mechanisms and procedures. These activities should be scrutinised through regular institutional self-evaluation, while the benefits to be derived from the interaction and co-ordination brought about by external peer group evaluation can not be overestimated. The Department of Education (1998:3) endorses this view by stating that the primary responsibility for quality assurance rests with teacher education institutions themselves.

Although many research outputs on quality issues have contributed to the understanding of quality assurance in higher education, it has limitations that do not permit any closure on the quality issue. A review of international research on quality in higher education reveals a lack of theory on quality and absence of agreement on the concept itself. It is essential to know exactly what quality is, if it has to be assured and managed (Muller,1996:2).

In order to contribute to the development of a model for the management of internal quality assurance in teacher education, the nature of internal quality assurance and the management thereof, will be discussed in this chapter.

3.2 THE CONTEXT OF DEBATES AROUND QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Although measures to assess and to promote quality were developed in America during the 1930's, it was only after the second world war that it was put into practice in Japan. Before the war Japan aimed to achieve its national aims by means of military defeat and was well known as a producer of low cost and low value products. After being defeated in the war, Japan had to find other ways of achieving its national goals. In order to move away from its reputation as a producer of low quality products, quality improvement and quality assurance became the focal point in all workplaces. Total Quality Management (TQM), propagated by Edwards Deming and Dr. Joseph Juran, became an integral part of all forms of production. Japan achieved great success and within a few decades developed into an economic giant (Sallis, 1993:13).

Almost thirty years later the United States of America and England adopted the approach of TQM. As competition in the world market became fiercer, competitors became more and the manufacturing cost of products increased. The quest to quality played an increasingly important role in industry and trading (Middelhurst, 1992:24). Maguire (1991:67) states that the market sphere, with its focus on competition, diversity and finance, started to play a dominating role and became the only arbiter of freedom, choice, success or failure. This also applied to education.

Frazer (1992:9) states that the 1990's became known as the "decade of quality", in the same way that efficiency was a major theme during the 1980's. Concerns about the quality of education which tertiary institutions provide are not a new

phenomenon. It is evident that countries worldwide share some common goals regarding quality in higher education. In South Africa the first meaningful debate about university quality was held at the University of Cape Town in 1977. It was, however, only in 1987 that the quality of higher education in South Africa was placed under direct spotlight (Noruwana, 1996:2). From then onwards a number of workshops and conferences were held on institutional self-evaluation and quality promotion.

According to Du Toit (1995:305) and Moodie (1991:9) educational policy has become an integrated part of national economic and social policy of countries over the world. Ministries of education are under pressure to ensure that higher education contributes to the goals of economic development, social mobility and quality (Stetar, 1996:4). Governments worldwide want to assure that their financial inputs into education are utilised to deliver the intended results. Education and training is seen as the most important vehicle to economic success and it is expected from educational institutions to supply in the demand for skilled manpower for such economic activities. The perception, however, exists that educational institutions do not measure up to this demand.

Dissatisfaction with current quality assurance efforts in education generally stems from the following factors (Stetar, 1996:6):

- legacy of centralized state planning;
- command and control economies;
- massive economic and political changes;
- irrelevance of much of the higher education curriculum;
- an ignorance of the needs of learners, parents and employers;
- increasing cost without an increase in value;
- inconstant descriptions and evaluation of quality;
- a lack of quantitative measurement and the results thereof;
- a lack of accountability;
- reactive instead of proactive management;

- ignorance of community- and market needs and a resistance to change; and
- discontent with higher education bureaucracies.
- the public view that higher education is inefficient .
- misplaced satisfaction with its own services and products.

Various voices contribute to the current debate about quality assurance in higher education. Barnett (1992:5) identifies the following factors that gave rise to this debate:

- A shift from a system that was favored by a few to a system in which a large proportion of the population participates and in which an even larger proportion of the population now feels that it has claims.
- A shift from a higher education system which has been essentially part of the cultural apparatus of society to a higher education system which is much more part of the economic apparatus of society. Higher education has become a force of production in its own right.
- A shift from higher education being a personal and positional value to a system being of more social good, having a general societal value.
- A shift from higher education being valued for its intrinsic properties to its being an instrumental good, especially for economic survival amidst expanding world markets.
- A shift from a culture characterised by the formation of personal life-world projects to one dominated by the formation of public and strategic policies.
- Pressure for higher quality coming from the academic community itself. Where tertiary institutions in the past were mostly catering for the elite, education has become a human right and it is expected from these institutions to provide in the need of the masses. Higher education institutions have to accommodate more and more learners, though the budgets of these institutions stay the same.

Educators have not been shy about implementing quality measures in the past. Not meeting the challenge, is not because of lack of interest or motivation. While most initiatives towards quality were basically good ideas, Kaufman and Zahn (1993:4)

believe that it did not meet the promise due to lacking the following essential components:

- a shared vision of the kind of world that is wanted for tomorrow's education;
- defined, measurable objectives related to an ideal vision;
- a corporate culture in education where everyone shares a passion to move continuously nearer to the ideal vision and accomplishment of the objectives;
- a view of education as a service to clients;
- a process that encourages success for students, parents and all citizens; and
- a record-keeping system in which progress is monitored and failure and success are identified and continuously improved.

In the light of general dissatisfaction with the performance of higher educational institutions, it becomes vital that these institutions increasingly demonstrate their effectiveness and efficiency to all stakeholders in a visual manner (Van Vught & Westerheijden, 1994:369). Quality management, continuous improvement, client satisfaction, positive return on investment and doing things right the first time should be the intention of any organisation that wants to make a contribution. Viewing the contribution of quality assurance worldwide, educational leaders should find the will and the way to define and create quality (Kaufman & Zahn, 1993:6).

Magennis (1993:247) states that there is general agreement on the purposes of quality assurance in higher education. He also advocates that a certain status has been attached to quality assurance and the purposes thereof without any consensus amidst academic and other stakeholders of higher education on the concept of quality itself.

Serious mismatches between purpose, structure, mechanisms and procedures are common in quality assurance systems and raise questions about the general understanding of these matters.

According to Noruwana (1996:4) quality is an enigmatic concept that defies attempts at defining it. Robert Pirsig (in Noruwana, 1996:4) highlights this problem when he states: " Quality, you know what it is , yet you don't know what it is. But that's contradictory. Some things are better than others, they have more quality. For all

practical purposes it really does exist. Obviously some things are better than others but what's betterness? "

Any attempt at quality assurance will depend on the institution's understanding of quality. In order to clarify the concept "quality" broad categories or dimensions of quality will now be discussed with a view to highlight those aspects of the concept with which higher education institutions may find great difficulty in agreeing, as well as those with which they would more readily agree and use to guide the quest for quality.

3.3 THE CONCEPT QUALITY

3.3.1 Defining quality

According to Noruwana (1996:4) an analysis of the definitions of quality can be a scholarly endeavour on its own. Amidst the numerous definitions of quality, it seems that descriptions of quality can be divided into conventional and contemporary conceptions of quality.

Conventional descriptions of quality focus on the inherent characteristics of a product or a service and the professional evaluation thereof. Quality products and services are regarded products or services designed and manufactured according to precise, measurable standards. Priority is given to the vision, interpretation and measurement criteria, of managers, professional staff and technicians within organisations (Ruben, 1995:158).

More **contemporary** descriptions of quality are those that focus on client expectations and demands. According to this conception, quality begins and ends with client satisfaction. Organisations have to deploy all processes and procedures to satisfy client expectations. (Ruben, 1995:158).

These differences in approaches to quality are testimony to the point that quality is a contested concept. The contemporary debate over quality is a vivid example of the postmodern society, in which rival definitions of large issues are defended without any obvious way of arbitrating between them or any supra-cultural definition (Barnett, 1992:45). The numerous descriptions and definitions of quality in the educational context, can however, be categorised as follows:

3.3.1.1 Fitness for purpose

Ruben (1995:189) defines quality as a product's fitness for purpose according to a set of required standards. The fitness for purpose approach to quality has been used with great success over the past two decades in industry and trade. In education it refers to the ability of the institution to fulfill its mission, or a programme of study to fulfill its aims.

The Technical Committee (DoE, 1998:137) endorses the notion of quality as "fitness for purpose", focussing on the ability of an institution to fulfil its mission or a programme to accomplish its aims and objectives, where these are developed on the basis of a client's needs and with reference to specified desired outcomes. Fitness for purpose should thus be the test of performance (Ruben, 1992:189). Purpose is regarded the organising principle with reference to which learning areas must be identified and learning programmes and qualifications must be framed.

The fitness for purpose definition has been widely criticised. It has been argued that this definition of quality is a direct derivative of the account of quality employed in industry. The manufacturing definition of quality states that designers of a manufacturing product will at the pre-manufacturing stages of the product specify what the major purpose of the product will be and which properties the product must have to satisfy these purposes. Quality, once manufactured, will be determined by deciding if the product fits the predetermined purpose. Bunting (1996:4) states that adopting the fitness for purpose analogy of quality for education, will have major implications as this definition of quality carries with it the need to find mechanisms, based on those adopted by industry, for establishing the purposes of education, for determining the criteria to be used to assess success or failure in the achievement of those purposes and for measuring the achievements of institutions against these set criteria. Bunting (1996:3) maintains that while an object may meet all its requirements and predefined purposes, it may nevertheless a poor quality item.

Weller (1996:31) disagrees with Bunting in that he states that all organisations are both product- and service-oriented. As in business, educational institutions have three measurable components, namely the physical product itself (that which is tangible and which the customer can evaluate through personal experience and affix

value), the service environment (the confines in which the product is produced and service is carried out) and the service delivery system (how the service is provided to the customer). Weller (1996:30) regards the product of education as the diploma: a tangible product which represents a standard of accomplishment with a commonly held value. The product of education must have the expected properties to satisfy the need of customers: it should be fit for its purpose.

Barnett, (1992:45) argues that the fitness for purpose definition of quality misses an important aspect of the notion of quality, as it confuses quality and standards. Manufacturers when specifying the purposes of a product, are not laying down criteria for the determination of quality but are rather specifying the standards the product must meet. If the product meets the predetermined purposes, all that can be said is that it has met the required standards. It does not follow that the product is an item of good or high quality. Judgements of quality must be relative to a context, but may never be relative within the context.

3.3.1.2 Quality as perfection

According to this definition, quality refers to a high level of performance or achievement, by virtue of general consensus and reasonable stability over time. Quality is regarded a standard against which to judge others. The set standard remains the ultimate goal until such time that consensus about the standard seems to exist (Weller, 1996:32).

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines quality as "a degree of excellence" where degree implies a comparison and a form of measurement. This definition of quality which has its origins in industry is proposed by Crosby (1979:39). He developed the concept of quality as turning out perfect products. Central to this definition is the idea of conformance to predetermined standards and requirements. Zero defects is seen as synonymous with quality as perfection.

The White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of higher education (1997b:12) refers to the principle of quality as maintaining and applying educational standards, both in the sense of specific expectations and requirements that should be complied with and in the sense of excellence that should be aimed at. Doherty (1994:10) regards quality as synonymous with excellence in the sense that quality

educational experiences should deliver good value, or value of goodness, which is susceptible to measurement.

The expectations and ideals can differ from context to context, partly depending on the specific purposes pursued. Applying the principle of quality entails evaluating services and products against set standards, with a view of improvement, renewal or progress (SA, 1997a:12).

Ellis (in Doherty, 1994:7) states that quality is an ambiguous term since it has connotations of both standards and excellence. In debates around the functioning of higher education there is a considerable overlap between the concepts of quality and standards. A clear distinction is therefore needed between standard and quality.

Educational standards relate to three areas of activity, namely (Harvey & Green, 1993:5):

- Academic standards

Measure the ability to meet the required level of academic attainment.

- Standards of competence

Measure specified levels of ability on a range of competencies. Service of standards

- Service of standards

Assess identified elements of the service or facilities provided.

According to Barnett (1992:55) the concept of standards is independent of the concept of quality. The standard of an enterprise is the measure or criterion against which the enterprise is to be judged. It is the performance of the enterprise against the standards in question that determines whether the enterprise is of high quality or not. In higher education comparable institutions could be assessed against the same standards and being found to be of differing quality, their performances varying when judged against the standards in question. However, one institution may set the standard by which it wishes to be judged as the "golden standard" and the other institution, having a different kind of institutional mission, may be content to be judged according to different and arguable lower criteria. If, on a certain aspect of their institutional performance, for example the quality of teaching, the second institution was judged to perform as well as the first institution, it might be said that

the first institution, in terms of its teaching and the standard by which it wished to be judged, was of poor quality. It is thus possible to find institutional performance of low quality against high standards and institutional performance of high quality when measured against comparatively lower standards.

The typification of the relationship between quality and standard illustrates that the concept of standards only gets value when varying standards can be identified against which different institutions or programmes are to be judged. Even if every institution could be said to be of acceptable quality, questions will still arise about how quality can be improved. There might be no concern over the standards by which the institutions are operating, but the quality of the services and activities that constitute higher education can always be enhanced. Matters of quality can always get a purchase in matters of higher education whereas the same cannot be said about standards (Barnett, 1992:57).

The Technical Committee (DoE, 1998:135) supports the statement of Barnett with the argument that the setting of higher standards will not necessarily bring about quality improvement. To achieve this, standards must be matched by suitable quality assurance mechanisms, institutional commitment as well as motivation and active engagement of practitioners and system managers in institutional, programme and individual self-evaluation. Strydom (1992:vi) states that educational quality does not only refer to outstanding accomplishment of institutional aims, goals and objectives, but also to the manner in which the accomplishment is achieved. An institution of integrity is one that studies itself systematically, with a view to enhance its quality in order to increase its stature within the wider educational community (Strydom, 1992:v1).

Quality in an educational context cannot be measured in a neutral way. The quality of education can just be measured in terms of the values, norms and culturally determined patterns of thinking of its community. Noruwana (1996:5) advocates that due to the fact that higher education institutions are imperfect and in need of being developed into centres of quality, it would be inappropriate for these institutions to base their procedures and strategies on this definition of quality.

3.3.1.3 Customer satisfaction

Sallis (1993:39) define quality as maximising customer satisfaction by constantly exceeding their expectations. This description of quality in education, is widely used by governments and financial auditors who have to determine the effectivity of public expenditure and investment. Within this context the primary criterion is the cost-effectiveness of the institution (Ellis, 1993:240). Quality can thus be achieved through identifying all customers being served, by determining what constitutes quality in the eyes of these customers and by delivering what is necessary to exceed their expectations.

Stakeholders have in a sense a contractual relationship with educational institutions. Students can expect that the courses for which they have enrolled, as well as the delivery of these courses, be of high quality. Central government, which funds these institutions, can legitimately expect efficiency of them in terms of high quality teaching, research and administrative practices. The concept of customer satisfaction implies accountability which involves rendering some form of account that an activity is carried out effectively and efficiently. Those affected by these activities are entitled to demand that it be carried out effectively and efficiently. Those who provide the resources have a right to see that it is used efficiently (Bunting, 1996:6).

Issues of quality in education are thus linked to accountability where accountability means demonstrating quality returns on quality investments with products and services provided more efficiently and effectively to satisfy customer demands and meet their expectations (Weller, 1996:30).

Curriculum development, teaching provision and all other processes of higher education must serve the needs, expectations, values and satisfaction of the learners and other role-players in higher education. Shortcomings in client satisfaction should be identified and corrective measures should be taken (Ruben, 1995:189).

Noruwana (1996:6) states that due to the fact that higher education institutions generally admit that their services and products need revamping and improving, this definition is not acceptable for these institutions. Frazer (1992:7) also disagrees with the above conception of quality. Frazer (1992:7) advocates that quality in higher

education is not the same as satisfying a customer with, for example, the latest model of motor car. Quality in higher education embraces, but is not synonymous with, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability in business. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:X1) disagree with this view in that they state that although the language and practice of industry carry assumptions about the relationship between customers and suppliers, these assumptions are appropriate to the work of a public service for which customers pay and are being asked to pay for over time. Educational institutions are a key part of the service economy and should be dealt with as such.

Consequently, when quality exists both in the service environment and in the service delivery system, the end result should be a quality product (Weller, 1996:31).

3.3.1.4 Value addedness

Quality is often referred to as value addedness. In education it may refer to measuring the performance of learners before and after completion of a course and then comparing the results. Doherty (1994:9) refers to quality in higher education as a state where it has been demonstrated that, through the educational process, the students' development has been enhanced: not only have they achieved the particular objectives set for the course, but in doing so, they have also fulfilled the general educational aims of the ability to participate in reasoned discourse, of critical self-evaluation, and of coming to a proper awareness of the ultimate contingency of all thought and action. The value addedness approach has its drive in trying to improve the quality of an individual course, module or subject. Barnett (1992:51) sees the main aim of this approach as focusing on the future development of a particular course, not trying to place it in some hierarchy or relationship with its rival offerings.

Barnett (1992:61) states that the above formulation of quality is intended to have applicability across all forms of higher education. It is intended to apply to all kinds of programmes, all kinds of subjects, broad fields of inquiry and professional settings.

3.3.1.5 Conclusion

Based on the above definitions and conceptualisations, it can be concluded that quality is:

- a strategy as well as a operational concept;
- a vision as well as a practical idea;
- an absolute as well as a relative matter;
- an objective as well as a means to achieve a set goal;
- an idea that applies to people as well as systems;
- an institutional centered as well as a client centered philosophy; and
- an issue that pertains to measurable as well as unmeasurable standards.

In the past higher education institutions succeeded in incorporating both the conventional and more contemporary approaches to quality. In the first place higher education institutions promoted a search for the truth and a search for knowledge, an internal matter. In the second place they have been flexible in terms of the needs and pressure of the wider community, an external matter. In the third place these institutions focussed on future development of the quality of recognisable units of educational delivery (Ruben, 1995:159). There are thus specific ways in which higher education institutions conceptualise quality . These conceptions of quality in the context of higher education wil now be discussed.

3.3.2 Quality in the context of higher education

Four dominant concepts of higher education underlie contemporary approaches to, and definitions of, quality, namely (Barnett, 1992:18):

- **Higher education as a production of manpower**

Students are seen as products, as outputs having utility value in the labour market. In terms of this conception, quality is demonstrated through the ability of students to succeed in the world of work, as measured by their employment rates and their career earnings.

- **Higher education as a training for a research career**

This conception implies that quality is measured less in terms of achievement of students than in the research profiles of the academic staff. The assumption is that the related input and output measures are in themselves indicative of educational quality.

- **Higher education as the efficient management of teaching provision**

Institutions are understood to be performing well if their throughput is high, given the resources at their disposal. Their total efficiency is what is in question here: not only how many students they can accommodate, but also with what velocity their students are successfully send out into the wider world.

- **Higher education as a matter of extending life chances**

Higher education under this conception, becomes the outcome of unfettered student demand, whatever it turns out to be. The key indicator of institutional achievement here lies in the percentage growth of student numbers and in the range of entrants.

In all four conceptions higher education is regarded a total system, in which students enter as inputs, are processed, and emerge as outputs. It is a view of higher education in which the educational experience of students is neglected unless there is something amiss with the output, for example when employers complain that their employees are under-skilled or insufficiently specialised. These approaches to quality are characterised by a consensus of a systems approach in which higher education becomes a black box: it does not matter what goes into the box as long as the quantity of desired inputs and outputs is achieved (Barnett, 1992:19).

According to Barnett (1992:19) it is not possible to adopt a definite approach towards quality without taking up a normative position connected with the ultimate aim of higher education. If, for example, higher education is regarded as a process of fulfilling particular slots in the labour market with individuals who are going to be "productive", then one way of examining quality could be to examine the destination of the students. The question is not only whether students are employed, but also whether they are employed in the kinds of positions envisaged by the course designers.

If, in assessing the quality of higher education, the assumption is that the quality of higher education is more demonstrated in the nature of the intellectual development that takes place in student's minds, in the depth and breadth of the understanding that students achieve, in their ability to be self-critical and in their capacity to apply that understanding and self-critical capacity to all they experience and do, then quality of higher education takes on a quite different character. Under this conception

of higher education, Barnett (1992:29) advocates that quality appraisal will not rest content with economic indicators of output, but will rather focus on exploring the educational processes within institutions.

As a result of pressure to focus on quality, higher education institutions are presently pressurised to review their traditional conceptions and practices of quality. In order to achieve quality in higher education, it is expected that quality assurance and quality commitment should be part of all educational systems or institutions, because it will always have a set of stakeholders, at least some of which would insist that most of its activities be of high quality. The expectations of these stakeholders form part of the accountability framework within which educational institutions must work (Barnett, 1992:20).

Throughout the literature study that was undertaken, the concepts of quality control and quality assurance are clearly linked to the improvement of quality in higher education. As the focus of this research is on quality assurance, the concept "quality control" will be briefly defined with the view to differentiate it from the concept "quality assurance".

3.4 Quality control and quality assurance

3.4.1 Quality control

Juran (1989:145) defines quality control as a managerial process during which an institution's actual performance is evaluated, actual performance is compared to goals and action is taken on the difference. For each subject of control it is necessary to establish a quality goal. A quality goal is an aimed at target towards which effort is expended.

Hellriegel and Slocum (1992:693) describe quality control as an organisational strategy which is pursued through a variety of methods that are intended to ensure customer satisfaction. Quality control refers to product inspection during or at the end of the production process. The focus is often on corrective controls, fixing the mistake after delivery, rather than making the product right the first time.

Stoner and Freeman (1992:654) define quality control as a strategy whereby each stage of production is controlled so as to minimise or eliminate errors.

Piper (1993:7) defines quality control as management procedures for evaluating and guaranteeing standards. Quality control refers to the procedures for ensuring that purposes are established and that performances conform to specifications.

Doherty (1994:110) defines quality control as a system based on feedback, a means of gaining information so that errors can be corrected. In education quality control requires feedback from staff, students and employers in terms of the educational products delivered.

According to Du Toit (1995:143) quality control involves the achievement of planned and leveraged change through leadership, other institutional strategies and external peer pressure, the assessment of the adequacy of inputs and the functioning of programmes and services, making achievable changes as needed and assessing the achievement of results in the light of stated intentions, standards or norms.

It can be concluded that quality control focuses on products and is a means of gaining information so that errors can be corrected. The Technical Committee (DoE, 1998:154) states that governments have initially over-emphasised quality control as a means of forcing providers to account for the funding received from government coffers. As providers develop more effective institutional quality management systems, bureaucratic quality controls should be removed. The evolution of quality systems is towards more internal, less prescriptive and less intrusive means.

3.4.2 Quality assurance

3.4.2.1 Defining quality assurance

Quality assurance as a dynamic process is increasingly assuming new meanings and dimensions. The Department of Education (1997a:44) defines quality assurance as the process or system of ensuring that the degree of excellence specified is achieved. Bunting (1996:5) states that quality assurance refers to the system through which institutions ensure that the quality control techniques are carried out.

Freeman (1994:10) defines quality assurance as a systematic process to identify market needs and determining working methods to meet those needs. Quality assurance is synonymous with a well-run management system.

Webstock (1999:13) defines quality assurance as the internal system adopted by an institution to demonstrate to itself and others to what extent the institution is fulfilling the mission and goals that it has set for itself. It applies to all levels of operation and is essentially concerned with how each part of the institution satisfies itself that it is achieving its goals within the context of the broader institutional goals set. It is concerned with closing the feedback loops by putting systems in place which allows for self-evaluation of operations in order to feed such information back into the system to bring about continual improvement.

According to Du Toit (1995:143) quality assurance is a process which involves assessing achievement of results in the light of stated intentions, standards or norms, assuring that internal regulatory mechanisms are in place and functioning and reporting to the public, government and clients.

In order to achieve quality in teacher education the Technical Committee (DoE, 1998:138) proposes a dynamic and developmental system in which quality procedures in professional education are systematic but operate within a devolved quality assurance paradigm. The quality assurance system proposed by the Technical Committee (DoE, 1998:138) highlights the need to establish and maintain self-improving processes and systems in an institution and in specific programmes. It requires wide consultation and agreement throughout an institution on the purpose and methods of the quality assurance processes and a feedback system geared to identify and remedy deficiencies in the system. Structures to carry out formative and summative evaluation of courses and programmes developed within institutions need to become integral components of courses. Institutions need to transform to become self-improving structures. The standards for quality assurance should be generated out of field analysis or careful examination of the domain of academic, professional and occupational practice and should account for the teaching and learning processes in professional education (DoE, 1997a:139).

While the exact nature of quality assurance systems varies across organisations and institutions, some common features or purposes of quality assurance can be discerned.

3.4.2.2 The purpose of quality assurance

According to Brennan (1996:5-7), Harvey and Green (1993:11) and Strydom (1996:6) some combination of seven purposes can be found in all national quality assurance systems:

- To improve the quality of higher education provision.
- To ensure accountability for public funds.
- To stimulate competitiveness between institutions.
- To check the quality of new institutions.
- To transfer authority between the state and institutions.
- To provide assurance of professional and academic standards.
- To enable rationalisation decisions to be made in the system at national and regional levels.
- To assign institutional status.
- To make international comparisons.

Tertiary institutions in South Africa have in the past not only participated in quality assurance initiatives, but have to a great extent committed themselves to promote quality in their institutions. A number of these initiatives will now be discussed.

3.4.2.3 Quality assurance measures in South African higher education

In 1987 the quality of Higher education in South Africa was for the first time placed under direct spotlight (Noruwana, 1996: 2). From then onwards a number of workshops and conferences were held on institutional self-evaluation and quality promotion. These concerns and debates resulted in a number of quality initiatives across the three sectors of higher education:

(a) The Committee of University Principals (CUP)

In 1995 the CUP approved the establishment of a Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) with the purpose to promote quality in South African universities, to assist universities in conducting productive institutional self-evaluation at institutional and programme levels and to create a basis for development (Strydom, 1996:1).

A number of internal and external factors had an influence on the establishment of the QUP (Brink, 1996:5):

- Quality assurance procedures in various forms have been put in place in recent years in a number of countries, usually because the respective governments required more accountability for the spending of public funds on higher education.
- Universities in South Africa were never held accountable for the effectiveness of the money they spent.
- The CUP in its investigation document in 1987 implied that degrees awarded at different universities are not all of the same standard.
- The rationalisation programme that the CUP embarked on in the mid 1980's because of under-utilisation of facilities and the duplication of programmes.
- The voluntary submission of universities to some kind of quality audit process.

The CUP introduced a system of quality promotion with no punitive connotation attached to it (Brink, 1996:7). The two available options were evaluations at institutional level or evaluations at programme level. The CUP embarked on evaluation at the institutional level with the aim of establishing a quality culture in institutions (Brink, 1996:6-9). Universities are ranked according to their own mission statements and own sets of goals. There are no ranking tables according to sets of criteria and no coupling with financing as it will imply a punitive element.

(b) The Certification Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC)

During 1986 a draft Bill was opened in Parliament for the establishment of a certification body with legal authority to ensure that the standard of education and examinations in all technikons is equal and to refuse certification where standards are not met. The Certification Council for Technikon Education Act, 1986 (Act No 88 of 1986) was promulgated. Authority for examination was transferred to the technikons as the council decided that statistical techniques could not be applied for assurance of equal standards concerning exams. The emphasis was gradually shifted from certification to accreditation and eventually to quality monitoring and possible quality auditing. Certification was removed from the government and handed over to the statutory body that became known as SERTEC (Jacobs, 1996:5).

(c) Norms and standards for teacher education

Norms and standards for teacher education was declared national policy by the Minister of Education on September 1995. This was the first time in the history of South Africa that a national policy for teacher education had been declared. The policy reflects the letter and spirit of the Constitution and is intended to inform the intellectual and professional culture of teacher education institutions (DoE, 1995a:1).

The policy document is designed to set minimum standards for the education of teachers in South Africa while creating mechanisms for ensuring the continued pursuit of excellence. In order to realise these goals the document:

- formulates aims for teacher education programmes;
- specifies the outcomes of teacher education; and
- drafts minimum structural criteria for teacher education courses based on these aims and outcomes.

The evaluative process should be managed in terms of mandating agencies to evaluate the quality of education at individual institutions, setting guidelines for such evaluations and formally accrediting those institutions which comply with the guidelines to offer specific courses (DoE, 1995:5).

Norms and standards for teacher education aims at ensuring quality in teacher education within an equitable, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist education system (DoE, 1995:4). The intention is that the Norms and Standards will provide the structure and mechanisms by which reconstruction in teacher education may be accomplished.

The functions of generating norms, accrediting qualifications and evaluating qualifications are all located within the Department of Education. This creates the unfortunate situation of a lack of quality control over providers and their programmes and tensions between past regulations and emerging policy.

In September 1997 a Technical Committee was appointed by the Department of Education with the aim to examine and revise the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education within the parameters of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Curriculum 2005 and the regulations regarding the employment of educators.

The Technical Committee had the task of producing a report with a systematic model for developing professional education, training and development practitioners. The

model that they propose is a standards-generative model which provides a set of Norms and Standards to ensure that qualifications are generated, registered and accredited in a systematic and rigorous manner and which should promote quality assurance and cost-effective state expenditure (DoE, 1998: 2). Informing this proposal is the assumption that the revised

Norms and Standards should emerge as a crystallisation of agreements among all stakeholders with respect to the career progression pathways, sets of standards and qualifications within the NQF and their location in a broader framework of teacher development and professionalisation.

(d) The NQF

The Bill on the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (1997) has placed renewed emphasis on the issue of quality in higher education. This is supported by the recommendations of the NCHE (April 1996) according to which a quality assurance system is central to a higher education system, an essential mechanism to address quality differentials across institutional programs and an important element in the governance of institutions.

In South Africa the roots of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are to be found in the virtually universal discontent with the nature and quality of education and training. The intention of the NQF is to bring about transformation. The perception that South Africa needs national standards for education and training grew in the late 1980's. It was stimulated by a range of influences (SAQA, 1997:3):

- The anticipation of major changes in society which required new ways of organising institutions in order to establish a working democracy.
- Constant discontent in the field of education. Demands for people's education led to a growing awareness of the bankruptcy, inefficiency and irrelevance of much of education and training.
- Dissatisfaction in trade and industry because the education and training system was lagging far behind its international counterparts. There was recognition of the need to create the competencies required in a technologically demanding, competitive global economy with rapidly changing forms of work.

- Complex and disarticulated systems of certification created artificial barriers to progress in learning and work and aimed at exclusions rooted in the heritage of job reservation.
- Findings that some programmes were lacking in direction, purpose and status and thus failed to provide substantive benefit for learners.
- Trends abroad where the Western curriculum was being challenged by demands for greater modern relevance and accountability in education and training, and thus for standards which would encourage the achievement of outcomes.

The SAQA Act (1997) provides for the establishment of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing the achievements of education providers in offering programmes that meet the standards and qualifications approved by the relevant National Standards Bodies.

According to the NQF, the state will oversee a self-regulated Quality Assurance System for higher education through the National Qualifications Framework, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and its Qualifications Councils, National Standards Bodies and Education and Training Quality Assurers as explained in the South African Qualifications Authority Bill, 1995. The state will only intervene in higher education through SAQA in the case of malfunctioning or lack of effort in instructional auditing and programme accreditation. The higher education system should design and co-fund with the state in controlling the quality assurance system. In this way the higher education system will feel compelled to support and carry out the mandate of quality assurance in a professional manner (Strydom, 1996:11).

Quality assurance initiatives in South Africa are concerned with how an institution organises itself to ensure that quality is continuously maintained and improved in all its activities. It is, however, not enough simply to lay down procedures without ensuring that they are being followed and that they have the desired results. In order to achieve quality in an institution, quality performance must be designed into the way that the institution works and must permeate all aspects of the institution (Murgatroyd and Morgan, 1993:59). This means that quality assurance should primarily be an internal matter. However, in order to be effective and sustainable,

quality assurance should be managed at all stages of the customer-supplier relationship (Murgatroyd and Morgan, 1993:54-55).

3.5 THE MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

3.5.1 Orientation

According to Freeman (1994:14) quality assurance is merely a grandiose term for a well-run management system. Strydom (1992:vii) states that by linking the idea of quality to management, it becomes clear that the responsibility for assuring quality in the activities within an institution should implicitly be part of the management function.

Leading and operating an organisation successfully requires managing in a systematic and visible manner. Managing an organisation encompasses the management of quality assurance amongst other management disciplines (ISO 9000, 1999:1).

3.5.2 Defining the management of quality assurance

Kaufman and Zahn (1993:5) define quality management as the "glue" for substantial and continuous educational improvement. All organisations produce outputs that are intended to achieve customer satisfaction. As do other organisations, education have its external clients, the citizens who hire their outputs and pay the taxes. Educational institutions have to demonstrate results or products, including learners who complete courses or students who graduate. In addition there are processes that deliver results. Finally, educational institutions have inputs or ingredients: existing resources, buildings, teachers and lecturers and the skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities the learners bring to these institutions. Kaufman and Zahn (1993:22) argue that quality management links these elements, assure that they all fit together and that all parties become participants in achieving quality.

The management of quality assurance focuses on providing confidence to the organisation and its customers of its ability to provide products that consistently fulfil requirements. It involves a system of co-ordinated activities to establish policy and objectives and to achieve those objectives (ISO 9000, 1999:13). According to ISO 9000 (1999:3) the management of quality assurance through a quality management system approach enables organisations to analyses customer requirements, to

define the processes that provide products acceptable to the customer and to keep these processes under control. A quality management system provides the framework for continual organisational improvement.

In an effective quality management system, processes and the associated responsibilities, procedures and resources are established and maintained in a consistent manner. In order to clarify responsibilities and authorities and to facilitate continual improvement, responsibility is assigned for managing each process (ISO 9000, 1999:8).

Crosby (1985:19) defines the management of quality as a systematic way of guaranteeing that organised activities happen the way they are planned. It is a management system concerned with preventing problems from occurring by creating the attitudes and controls that make prevention possible.

Juran (1989:176) attempts to provide managers of organisations with a structured approach to manage quality throughout an institution. To him strategic quality management is the totality of ways through which quality in an organisation can be achieved. According to Juran (1989:179) the management of quality involves profound changes in an organisation, some of which may be unwelcome. These changes include:

- the establishment of broad quality goals as part of the institutions intended future quality plan;
- the adoption of cultural changes that could disturb long-standing beliefs and habits;
- the rearrangement of priorities with resulting upgrading of certain skills and downgrading of others;
- creating new infrastructure, including a quality council and a quality controller, and getting it in place;
- extensive training for the entire hierarchy; and
- upper-management participation in managing for quality to an unprecedented degree.

Juran (1989:177) states that the management of quality as a process consists of establishing goals, planning to meet the goals, providing the needed resources, establishing measures of performance, reviewing performance against goals and providing rewards based on results. One measure of an institution's capacity to maintain quality is its ability to anticipate and address problems rather than to react to them. A second is to involve everyone in the organisation. Most important is that all processes must contribute to the effectiveness of the institution.

According to Kaufman and Zahn (1993:7) organisations that have succeeded in quality management have invested in the following:

- They have focused organisational attention on meeting client requirements.
- Senior management led the way.
- All associates were properly trained, developed and empowered to continuously improve themselves as well as what did and delivered.
- Everyone used a systematic process for continued improvement.

Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:64) state that from an analysis of high-performing organisations and those that can be described as permanently failing, there are five critical features of successful quality management that are required to achieve sustainable quality improvements, namely:

- alignment with the organisation and commitment to a shared vision;
- an extended understanding of the customer-driven and process-oriented basis of quality;
- an organisation designed around teams, with investment in team development and changes made in performance management systems to reflect teamwork as the basis of activities;
- the setting of challenging goals which commit the organisation to significant increases in performance outcomes; and
- the systematic daily management of the organisation through the use of effective tools for measurement and feedback.

The success of implementing the critical features of quality management, largely depend on top management commitment to designating and training implementers,

positive launching of the quality assurance process, investment in continuous improvement of skills and recognition of success (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993:196-199).

Deming (in Kaufman & Zahn, 1993:8) defines fourteen characteristics of a quality management approach:

- Create constancy of purpose
- Adopt a new philosophy
- Cease dependance on mass inspection
- End the practice of awarding business on price alone
- Improve constantly the system of production and service
- Institute training on the job
- Institute leadership
- Drive out fear
- Break down barriers between departments
- Eliminate slogans and numerical targets
- Eliminate work standards and management by objectives
- Remove barriers that deprive workers and managers of their right to ownership and pride
- Institute a vigorous programme of education and self-improvement
- Put everyone in the company to work to accomplish the transformation

These major steps in the management of quality, represent a major departure from how conventional organisations do business, so different that Deming's steps are usually met with initial resistance and often derision. It is also true for educational institutions.

According to Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:184) shared goals, knowing the customer, the primacy of quality teams, outrageous goals and effective feedback by measurement can be regarded as the task of the management team. Without

management commitment an institution will permanently fail in its quality attempts. A permanently failing organisation is marked by the following characteristics:

- In the absence of a shared vision people are working in disconnected and contradictory ways, few are committed to the work of the organisation and there is a general sense of doubt about where the institution is going.
- While quality may be the rhetoric of the organisation, the primary purpose of the organisation appears to be self-perpetuation, despite concerns expressed by customers.
- The organisation is rigid in its hierarchy and has many levels of authority, there is little sense of belonging to a team and a great deal of internal competition between staff for promotion, recognition, project responsibility and other forms of reward.
- The goals are set simple and modest, based on small-step improvements and previous performance, are set annually and often relate to outcomes rather than processes.
- Employees receive little or no feedback about the effectiveness of their own work or about the way in which their work fits into the overall strategy of the organisation. Although there is an appraisal system, it is not based on clear data and performance indicators for process improvement. The organisation may perform at the same level as the previous year and is satisfied with it. Mediocrity and conformance are satisfactory states of affairs.

If educational institutions wish to achieve the goal of zero truancy, quality and quality assurance processes must be managed. It is vital that staff is frequently reminded of the institution's goals and that there is consistent focus on managing the process for achieving those goals. Outcome follows process. Enhanced outcomes follow from the quality of management being applied to the detail of the processes of the internal customer-supplier relationships within the institution (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993:65).

Adopting a continuous quality improvement approach through the management of quality assurance recasts the issue of ownership and control. The emphasis shifts from ownership and control of quality monitoring agencies to the ownership and

control of the quality improvement process itself. The emphasis is on the self-critical academic community rather than direct inspection of provision. Self-assessment with the aim of improvement is seen as indicative of the shift to self-governance and further as a necessary means of ensuring that the institution focuses its attention on quality issues (Harvey & Green, 1993:11).

Eight quality management principles have been identified to facilitate the management of quality assurance, namely (ISO 9000, 1999:1):

- a customer focused organisation: organisations should understand current and future customer needs, meet customer requirements and strive to exceed customer expectations;
- leadership: leaders establish unity of purpose, direction and the internal environment of the organisation. They create the environment in which people can become fully involved in achieving organisational objectives;
- involvement of people: people are the essence of an organisation and their full involvement enables their abilities to be used for the organisation's benefit;
- a process approach: desired results are achieved more efficiently when related resources and activities are managed as a process;
- a system approach to management: identifying, understanding and managing a system of interrelated processes for a given objective contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation;
- continual improvement: continual improvement is a permanent objective of the organisation;
- a factual approach to decision making: effective decisions are based on the logical and intuitive analysis of data and information; and
- mutually beneficial supplier relationships: mutually beneficial relationships between the organisation and its suppliers enhance the ability of both organisations to create value.

Although literature indicates that it would be difficult to prescribe a single procedure for quality assurance for any one institution, the components in the establishment

and management of quality assurance systems are generally alike. These components will now be discussed briefly.

3.5.3 Components in the design and management of a quality assurance system

3.5.3.1 Orientation

In order to design and manage a quality assurance system, organisations, including teacher education institutions, will have to take into consideration the following typical characteristics of quality assurance systems (Freeman, 1994:13):

- A quality assurance council or committee
- A quality assurance policy
- Clear mission and vision statements
- An environmental analysis
- Making judgements
- Reporting
- Strategic planning
- Provision of resources
- Taking action
- Monitoring action
- Re-defining vision and re-planning
- Giving recognition

The typical characteristics of quality assurance systems will now be exposed.

3.5.3.2 Establishing a quality assurance council

A fundamental step in establishing a quality assurance system is the creation of a quality council or committee. Such council exercises complete oversight with respect to establishing and maintaining a quality assurance system. The quality council membership typically consists of the senior managers of the institution. In large institutions quality councils may be established at multiple levels of the institutions

and members of upper level councils then serve as chairpersons for these lower level councils (Juran, 1989:185).

Kaufman and Zahn (1993:57) are of the opinion that a quality team should be created once the commitment to quality assurance has been made. The team should not consist of merely management members but should involve open enrollment. In order to achieve sustainable quality improvement in an institution, it has to be independent of any particular individual, it has to belong to the whole institution and to groups within it.

According to Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:143-147) high-performing quality teams have the following characteristics:

- a shared sense of purpose and vision
- open communication
- trust and mutuality
- useful creative conflict
- appropriate working methods
- appropriate leadership
- regular review and reflection
- enabling and encouraging individual development

3.5.3.3 Defining a quality assurance policy

The objective of this phase of the quality assurance process is to come to an understanding of the purpose of implementing a quality assurance strategy in an institution and to develop a quality policy to support it (Juran, 1989:186). Published quality policy statements are the result of intensive deliberation, followed by approval at the highest level of the institution. The quality council plays a major role in this process. Policy needs to be designed in such a way that it enables management to come to terms with the notion of quality assurance and to accept it as a process essential to improve quality. The legitimacy of the process of quality assurance and its policy depends on evidence of management commitment to activities at policy level (DoE,1998:145).

It is of vital importance that the purpose of quality assurance be communicated and debated in such a manner that commitment of the staff as a whole is ensured. Kaufman and Zahn (1993:59) are of the opinion that most staff members will commit themselves to the process when they realise that quality assurance is a serious effort. A partnership with common goals, a cooperative effort and shared ownership for quality results must be established.

Policies of the institution should provide the ultimate criteria against which activity is directed and performance assessed (DoE, 1997:9).

Without exception, all published quality policies declare the intention to meet the need of customers and to improve quality continuously. It is the responsibility of upper management to assure that such policy be updated regularly (Juran, 1989:186).

3.5.3.4 Developing mission and vision statements

Crucial in the success of setting organisational development targets, is the development of clear mission and vision statements.

The basic purpose of the mission statement is to define the areas of legitimate operation for the institution. It states why the institution has been created. The mission statement may be accompanied by a statement of vision and values (Freeman, 1994:19).

A vision statement is a description of the organisation: its size, its basic structure, its sphere of influence. Rather than describing the current state of the organisation, the vision statement presents a picture of the desirable future. According to Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:83) the vision of an institution has three basic functions, namely: to inspire staff, to act as a cornerstone for decision-making and to enable all in the institution to find common points for focusing energy to achieve sustainable quality improvements. A useful vision statement remains within the realms of possibility (Piper, 1993:17).

The value statement is an attempt to capture the basic philosophy of the organisation. It affirms the eternal verities which will inform all the dealings of the organisation and is thus in a sense a moral position. Together, the mission, vision and value statements define the essential organisation: its purpose, its philosophy and its form (Piper, 1993:18).

3.5.3.5 Environmental analysis

Necessary information is gathered through various forms of primary research during this phase. The focus is on how information can be gathered in order to make good decisions and not on measurement. According to Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:157) decisions in educational institutions are rarely made on the basis of a full and systematic evaluation of the options and changes are rarely made on the basis of systematic and skilled data-based evaluation.

An environmental analysis with strategic focus is of vital importance in the management of quality assurance (Strydom, 1992:22). A systematic analysis includes the internal (institutional) environment as well as the external (outside the institution) environment and should be directed by the mission of the institution.

Internal analysis should involve aspects such as strengths and weaknesses of the institution, the role of leadership and management and the competitive advantage per department/programme. It should further involve the professional development activities designed to introduce staff to new ideas in the field in which they will work. It is essential to allow staff members to assess their work from a new perspective and to gain insight into its strengths and weaknesses. This is also the phase during which student responses and peer evaluations are likely to be sought (DoE,1998:146).

3.5.3.6 Making judgements

During this phase identified staff members are expected to consider the various types of information gathered, in order to make judgements about the effectiveness of the particular institutional/programme element under consideration. This information may include student questionnaires, internally and externally conducted evaluation and relevant statistical information (DoE,1998:146).

3.5.3.7 Reporting

The internal quality analysis should result in an institutional quality report. After having made judgements, staff members responsible are expected to compile brief reports detailing the strengths and weaknesses of different institutional/programme elements. These reports should identify what action needs to be taken to build on the

strenghts and eliminate the weaknesses detailed in the report. The report should also indicate how the suggested action should be monitored (DoE, 1998:146).

3.5.3.8 Strategic planning

According to Strydom (1992:21) strategic planning for quality assurance involves the major strategic decisions of an institution and meets criteria such as the relationship between the institution and its external environment. In contrast, institutional planning processes which are internally focused, emphasise "how" to do the "what" stipulated by strategic planning, deal with the impact of macro issues on micro issues, are tied to organisational units and the budget/resource allocation process, are relatively certain and is highly participatory and constituency based (Strydom, 1992:22).

During the phase of strategic planning, quality goals are chosen from a list of nominations by all levels of the hierarchy. Only a few of these nominations will survive the screening process and will be included in the quality assurance plan (Juran, 1989:188).

In order to convert the aimed at quality goals into potential realities, specific tasks need to be assigned to specific employees. Juran (1989:190) refers to this process as deployment of quality goals, where deployment as used here means subdividing the goals and allocating the subgoals to lower levels of the institution. Such deployment provides an opportunity for participation by lower levels as well as communication both up and down the hierarchy of the institution. The lower level identifies the tasks which, if performed, will collectively meet the goals. The lower level also submits the bill: to perform these tasks, the following resources will be needed. Subsequent negotiations then lead to an optimum that balances the value of meeting the goals against the cost of doing so.

The identification of goals must be followed by clear and concrete action plans which contain measurable performance indicators (DoE, 1998:147). The purpose of performance indicators is to monitor the effectiveness and the efficiency of institutions, to monitor quality and academic standards, to monitor progress towards achieving the identified goals and to promote efficiency, effectiveness, quality, equity and redress.

Once the strategic planning process is functional, the focus must turn to building an appropriate support system to sustain the planning (Strydom, 1992:23).

Strategic planning is goal oriented, holistic in approach and scope, tied to institutional decision making and constructed to support institutional change towards quality. Strategy drives quality and requires the exercise of critical management skills.

3.5.3.9 Provision of resources

According to Juran (1989:192) resources are the price to be paid for the benefits of quality management. Resources may be selected after the objectives for what has to be delivered through quality assurance have been identified.

The absence of adequate resources has been a major obstacle in meeting the goals of many quality assurance processes. To bring projects to completion requires various resources, such as time for project leaders to guide projects, support from specialists and training in several directions. Resources are not always provided adequately and starve out many efforts to improve quality on a scale that offers major benefits (Juran, 1989:193).

Resources for achieving the maximum benefits of quality assurance include:

- The effort to establish the basic quality assurance system, including processes for goal-setting and deployment, evaluation of results, recognition and rewards.
- Training in the operation of the system.
- The effort required, at all levels of the system to administer the process on a continuing basis (Juran, 1989:192; Kaufman & Zahn, 1993:86).

3.5.3.10 Taking action

Appropriate action should be taken to build on the identified strenghts and to eliminate weaknessess in the institution or programme. It is imperative to set organisational developmental targets and processes as well as to provide an explanation as to how these will bridge the gap between the goals set and the capacity of the institution (DoE, 1997a:142).

3.5.3.11 Monitoring action (quality assurance audit)

The aim of this phase is to determine the effectiveness of the action suggested during the reporting phase in building on strengths and eliminating weaknesses of the institution/programme. The central function of the monitoring phase is to identify action for future improvement. This requires clear lines of responsibility and reporting (DoE, 1998:147). Juran (1989:194) refers to this phase in quality assurance as the process of quality control during which actual performance is evaluated, actual performance is compared to goals and action is taken on the difference. This is not a retrospective process but can lead to immediate changes in the actions being taken and to re-thinking the quality assurance strategy before the cycle begins again.

According to Juran (1989:204), Weller (1996:33) and Piper (1993:14) questions that would facilitate the phase of monitoring action could include the following:

- Are quality policies and quality goals appropriate to the institution's mission?
- Does the quality in the institution provide satisfaction to the client?
- Is the institution's quality competitive with the target of the marketplace?
- Is the collaboration between functional departments adequate to assure optimising performance?
- Is the institution meeting its responsibilities to society?

These kind of questions are not answered by conventional technological audits as the auditors of such audits seldom have the managerial experience and training needed to conduct specific institutional audits. It is of more value if internal quality audits are done by the management of institutions (Juran, 1989:204). Internal quality audits seek to ensure that the total institution are accountable for the provision of effective and efficient services within a framework which is complementary to and supportive of self-monitoring, evaluation and improvement. In all cases audits are concerned with the appropriateness of institutional objectives in relation to goals and client needs, adequacy of quality systems for realising these objectives, evidence of effectiveness and efficiency in the achievement of agreed objectives and identification of improvement needs and opportunities (Higher Education Quality Council, 1997:8). It thus functions as a form of summative evaluation of the entire

quality assurance process and is another clear moment at which external evaluation and student input can be valuable.

An evaluation plan in respect of that which is being evaluated, what the evaluation criteria and indicators are, what the achievement standards are, how evaluation will be done and when it will take place should be stated explicitly (Strydom, 1992:25). There plans should be aimed at the evaluation of specific goals and objectives and should be adequate in scope and depth to evaluate accountability.

According to the Higher Education Quality Council (1997:10) monitoring within higher education, is typically conceived of as an end-inspection activity based on annual or five year review exercises. By contrast, a commitment to continuous improvement requires that monitoring be viewed as an ongoing professional activity concerned with addressing the causes of unsatisfactory performance at relevant phases of an educational process.

The monitoring phase is the point at which the planning worksheets for the defining purpose and planning phases of the quality assurance strategy will be completed, allowing the process to begin again (DoE, 1998:147). Conclusions and recommendations that arise from the evaluation process must be action orientated and must lead to plans that will make their implementation possible.

3.5.3.12 Re-defining vision and re-planning

As good quality assurance procedures are circular, re-defining and re-planning should be an organic process through which the institution is able to respond fairly quickly to gaps in its quality or to changes in larger, societal needs (DoE, 1998:147).

3.5.3.13 Giving recognition

Much of the recognition of performance should consist of ceremonial action taken to publicise outstanding performance. Ceremonial actions are typically non-financial in nature. Awards are made by management at ceremonial occasions and are published through various media, such as the institution's newsletter and the local press (Juran, 1989:211).

3.5.3.14 Summary

It can be concluded that in the development and management of an internal quality assurance system, teacher education institutions need to:

- Clarify themselves in terms of the nature and definition of quality envisaged for the institution.
- Sensitise all stakeholders to the need for quality assurance.
- Make students the core of quality assurance procedures.
- Build teams and train staff for their role in the process of quality assurance.
- Build a leadership team with a clear focus on quality improvement.
- Develop baseline research and data bases on all aspects of the institution.
- Develop strategic plans and mission statements and use them to guide the quality assurance process.
- Budget for quality assurance

Although the maintenance and improvement of institutional quality should rest primarily on internal procedures for discovering and correcting weaknesses and failures, these internal efforts would be strengthened by a system of external audits of procedures, rather than by the current emphasis upon inputs which tend to measure conformity to norms. The success of quality assurance lies in the creation of an academic culture marked by self-criticism, openness to suggestions by others and a commitment to improving educational practice (Stetar, 1996:11).

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has exposed the nature and management of internal quality assurance in education. It has been highlighted that in the light of dissatisfaction with the performance of higher education institutions, it is vital that these institutions increasingly demonstrate their effectiveness and efficiency to all stakeholders. Quality management, continuous improvement, client satisfaction and positive return on investment should be the intention of all educational institutions.

Although a number of higher educational institutions have attempted to implement internal quality assurance measures in the past, little evidence exists to indicate the

success of such attempts. The primary contributory factor to unsuccessful attempts at implementing internal quality assurance in higher education, seems to be the lack of efficient management of the process. For any internal quality assurance system to be effective, it needs to be managed.

In the next chapter existing models for the management of internal quality assurance in education will be discussed.