
Although procedures for quality assurance have been constantly revised and refined in the last decades, the methodological foundation of external quality assurance hasn't changed substantially since the 1990s. Improvement and accountability have always been the basis for procedural design. But these two traditional purposes seem to have expanded to additional or even alternative ones, such as transparency, communication or policy evaluation, and it is not clear how far the present procedures are adequate to serve them. Neither it is clear if other external steering mechanisms, such as traditional rankings, the new transparency tools (U-Map and U-Multirank) or database repositories of indicators are better fit to address them. External quality assurance, whether quality assessment, accreditation and/or institutional/academic audits, may indeed become less likely to be the dominant method of judging academic quality, at the risk of becoming merely one amongst a number of voices judging quality. Not being seers we cannot predict the future. Some of us have offered diverse alternatives for the future of quality assurance. However, the present context is one of turmoil and uncertainty. A wise proposition will be to call our attention to the need to observe closely and continuously the evolution of developments such as rankings, learning outcomes, quality enhancement and risk management. As mentioned in Lemaitre's chapter, higher education is a dynamic system – it cannot be served well by quality assurance processes that are not prepared to learn (and to unlearn), to adapt and adjust to the changing needs of students, institutions and society.