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**Abstract**

Quality assurance processes have been applied to many aspects of higher education, including teaching, learning and assessment. At least in the latter domain, quality assurance needs its fundamental tenets critically scrutinised. A common but inadequate approach has been to identify and promote learning environment changes 'likely to improve' learning outcomes. They are simply labelled 'quality assurance' without establishing their effectiveness. Part of the problem is that the case for quality assurance has been largely taken as self-evident. Originally, quality assurance principles were developed in domains outside higher education. In those, auditable product, service and other standards play a central role. Although external processes do not directly transfer to higher education, their underlying principles offer perspectives and pointers for reconceptualising quality assurance and improving assessment and grading. Quality assurance should be grounded in authoritative and properly formulated academic achievement standards applied to actual student works, performances and course grades.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)