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**Abstract**

This article undertakes a review of Australian and international literature and higher education policy in response to the changing nature of university academic boards (also known as academic senates or faculty senates). It shows that governance has become an issue for both the state and for universities and that within this context risk management and accountability mechanisms such as academic quality assurance are taking an increasingly prominent role. These developments have altered the form and function of academic governance and have fundamentally affected the academic board. For example, some literature reports that the role of Australian academic boards now largely revolves around academic quality assurance and it is argued that this is potentially problematic because of a focus on audit-driven accountability mechanisms. However, the article concludes by suggesting that as part of a broader quality assurance framework there is also an opportunity for academic boards to have a central role in the development of academic standards that focus on enhancing learning outcomes rather than on compliance..(HRK / Abstract übernommen)