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**Abstract**

Among pioneering European countries who started to establish a formal higher education quality assurance system in the 1980s, the Netherlands adopted one based on peer review and quality enhancement, which was replaced in 2003 by an accountability-oriented accreditation system under the substantial influence of the Bologna Process. Recently, the emphasis is being put on institutional audit to restore a culture of quality within higher education institutions. This article addresses the question of what the higher education worldwide can learn from the evolution of Dutch quality assurance policy concerning control, the balance between accountability and quality improvement and trust. Finally, recent adaptations to the current, third, round of accreditation are also addressed in this context. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)