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**Abstract**

The paper highlights some of the results of a study concerning the implementation of quality assurance systems in Italian universities. Through an analysis carried out on Italian universities' websites and two case studies this paper tries to explain what is happening in Italian universities by identifying some trends of action concerning quality assurance. The main research questions are: what is quality in the Italian university system? What are the situated meanings attributed to it by academics? Italy does not have different types of higher education institutions as occur in some countries and despite the scarce attention paid by national legislation and by the government's policy towards the diversity of single institutions, this work points out the symptoms of a gradual emergence of differentiation. Spontaneous choices and implementation of different quality assurance systems reveals, in fact, differences between both the various universities themselves and also within the various disciplines, especially with regard to how academics define quality and thus in relation to the mission of the institution. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)