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**Abstract**

Although the conceptual distinction between academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities is fundamental to an understanding of the role of quality assurance in higher education, the distinction, and its implications, have not always been well understood in the case of transnational higher education. This paper explores both the source of academic standards and the criteria by which the quality of learning opportunities can be judged. It is argued that the distinction is of particular importance in the context of transnational education, because whilst judgements about quality may legitimately be susceptible to a degree of cultural influence, the same is not true of judgements about academic standards. It is suggested that a lack of attention to the logical distinction between standards and quality has hampered efforts by regulatory régimes around the world to develop coherent policies with respect to hosting transnational higher education provision. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)