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**Abstract**

This paper presents an empirical analysis of the quality assurance (QA) system in Taiwan that has recently undergone major reforms. In particular, this paper draws on the practice and impact of the QA system on Taiwan's higher education institutions (HEIs) related to higher education policy reforms. The Taiwanese government has distributed expenditure, and restructured higher education (HE) according to the results of the QA system conducted by the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan. To explore the government's policy strategies and performance criteria related to the QA system, this paper interviews policymakers and academics from four universities used to examine the process behind the formulation of QA policies and the influences of the QA system on HEIs. This paper identifies a number of changes to the academic profession and organisations that occurred within HEIs, resulting in new forms of management in HEIs, and which can be seen as unanticipated consequences of the QA system, beyond the government's expectations. Furthermore, the changes triggered by the QA system have not only intensified competition between

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universities but have also influenced HE policies in turn. These perspectives offer a different way of conceptualising the QA system in Taiwan's HE. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)