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**Abstract**

Quality management (QM) in teaching and learning has strongly “infected” the higher education sector and spread around the world. It has almost everywhere become an integral part of higher education reforms. While existing research on QM mainly focuses on the national level from a macro-perspective, its introduction at the institutional level is only rarely analyzed. The present article addresses this research gap. Coming from the perspective of organization studies, it examines the factors that were crucial for the introduction of QM at higher education institutions in Germany. As the introduction of QM can be considered to be a process of organizational change, the article refers to Kurt Lewin’s seminal concept of “unfreezing” organizations as a theoretical starting point. Methodologically, a mixed methods approach is applied by combining qualitative data derived from interviews with institutional quality managers and quantitative data gathered from a nationwide survey. The results show that the introduction of QM is initiated by either internal or external processes. Furthermore, some institutions follow a rather voluntary approach of unfreezing, while

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others show modes of forced unfreezing. Consequently, the way how QM was introduced has important implications for its implementation. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Seyfried, Markus,  
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