Guideline:

Benchmarking

Effective: 11 July 2019

Audience: Staff

Policy Category: Governance
Policy Sub-category: Quality Assurance

Key words:	quality assurance, benchmarking
Guideline Owner:	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic
Responsible Officer:	Senior Operations Officer, Governance and Assurance; Deans
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 These Guidelines have been developed as a resource for Staff to support the *Policy: Benchmarking.* The Guidelines set out the process to be followed when selecting Benchmarking partners and entering into formal Benchmarking activities (refer Attachment 1). They also provide examples of formal and informal Benchmarking activities and list resources to support effective Benchmarking.

2 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This Guideline should be read in conjunction with the following Policy:

2.1 *Policy: Benchmarking*

3 EXAMPLES OF BENCHMARKING AT THE UNIVERSITY

3.1 The University undertakes a range of formal and informal Benchmarking activities. Some examples include:

- Benchmarking of program learning outcomes against externally recognised benchmarks such as discipline standards.
- Comparison of national survey outcomes, including Course Experience Questionnaire/Graduate Destination Survey (CEQ/GDS), University Experience Survey (UES), HE Research Data Collection (HERDC); Your Voice Staff Survey; Learner Questionnaire (VET) and the Employer Questionnaire (VET).
- Rating systems, such as the Good Universities Guide.
- Comparisons against accepted professional and industry standards, which may or may not result in certification/accreditation.
- Benchmarking of assessment tools and outcomes through the Australian Medical School Assessment Collaboration (AMSAC) and of assessment tools through the IDEAL Consortium question bank calibration.
- Involvement in formal benchmarking groups, including Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), Deans and Directors Graduate Schools (DDoGS) and the Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association (TEFMA).
- Comparison of external policies and practices to inform development of policies and processes.
- Collaborative peer assessment of performance, such as through external expertise involvement in cyclical program reviews and external examination.
- Benchmarking through collaborative professional/peer groups.
- Staff involvement in professional associations and external review activities that facilitate identification and sharing of practices.
- Internal benchmarking across campuses and other Schools/areas of processes and outcome data.

3.2   Benchmarking differs from moderation. Moderation of assessment checks that marking is consistent, such as an assessment item would be awarded the same mark by any marker. Benchmarking assessment processes, on the other hand, makes areas for improvement and good practice transparent.

4   SELECTING BENCHMARKING PARTNERS

4.1   Factors to consider in selecting appropriate Benchmarking partners include:

4.1.1   The University's Objects.

4.1.2   Established or existing relationships.

4.1.3   Comparability (as relevant and including size, programs, disciplines or services).

4.1.4   Transferability of strategies.

4.1.5   Willingness to share information and commitment to the exercise by relevant Staff in the Benchmarking partner.

5   BENCHMARKING RESOURCES

5.1   There is a range of available resources to inform Benchmarking activities. These include the following:

(a)   *TEQSA Guidance Note: External Referencing (including Benchmarking)* https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-external-referencing-including-benchmarking

(b)   McKinnon, K. R., Walker, S. H., & Davis, D. (2000). *Benchmarking: A manual for Australian universities*. Canberra, Australia: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Higher Education Division.

(c)   Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-learning. (2014) ACODE - Leading in Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching - Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning. Retrieved from https://www.acode.edu.au/pluginfile.php/550/mod_resource/content/8/TEL_Benchmarks.pdf

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Version	Date of approval	Approved by	Amendment
1	16 March 2015	Vice Chancellor	Effective date – new Guideline.
2	11 July 2019	DVC, Academic	Formatted to new template; nomenclature updated; resource list updated.

6   ATTACHMENT 1: BENCHMARKING PROCESS STEPS

Identify Benchmarking Requirements

- What is being benchmarked and why?
- How is this aligned to the University's Objects and Strategic Goals?
- Does this require a collaborative approach with one or more benchmarking partners?
- Who may be appropriate partner/s?

Project Definition

- Who will lead the project?
- What are resource requirements and timing?
- Obtain authorisation.

Set up Benchmarking Partnership

- Clarify scope of project
- Clearly agree and articulate expectations, roles and responsibilities; expected mutual benefits and timeframes
- Clarify confidentiality arrangements for data sharing and storage
- Confirm intellectual property of benchmarking findings/results

Formalise Arrangements

- Finalise appropriate measures, reviewed for alignment to structures, processes and terminology to ensure that meaningful comparisons may be made
- Clarify associated costs
- Determine milestones and key dates
- Seek approval from relevant Dean or Deans in the case of program/discipline level benchmarking
- Liase with Legal Office to finalise and approve a formal Agreement as necessary

Obtain Data

- Ensure data are in the same format where possible if information is being obtained from multiple parties (consider use of template)

Analyse Data

- Identify any gaps
- Identify issues for clarification and liase as necessary with benchmark partners
- Identify any additional data requirements or contextual information needed

Review Findings

- What is good practice?
- Where are any performance gaps?
- Are there reasons for the gaps?
- Determine strategies to address the gaps as appropriate
- Identify opportunities for enhancing current practices
- Consider cost/benefit of undertaking enhancements

Implement & Report Findings; Evaluation

- Develop action/implementation plan with clear responsibilities and timeframes
- Communicate findings and seek agreement of next steps to relevant Executive
- Monitor progress against implementation of actions
- Review and evaluate impact and improvements generated
- Evaluate benchmarking process to inform future benchmarking activities
- Report outcomes through University processes such as Program Monitoring and Program Review as appropriate