

Benchmarking Policy and Procedure

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Purpose

This Policy and Procedure outlines an approach to benchmarking at the Australia Institute of Future Education (**AIFE**).

Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to:

- AIFE's higher education courses that are accredited by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (**TEQSA**),
- Members of governing bodies, and
- All staff, academic and corporate (full-time, part-time, casual or contract).

Policy

To ensure that AIFE operates in line with best practice, a range of benchmarking activities will be undertaken to compare with other similar providers, the following matters:

- Student outcomes,
- Course structure and content, and
- Operational and governance processes, resources and structures.

Benchmarking outcomes will be used as part of a continuous improvement process, to improve the student experience through changes in teaching and learning, governance and operations.

Benchmarking Categories

AIFE's benchmarking activities fall into the following categories:

- **Course** – course structure and content, entry criteria, learning outcomes and assessment methods
- **Policies and frameworks** – comparing academic and non-academic policies
- **Process** – comparison of particular processes and practices, e.g. complaint resolution time
- **Student outcomes** – comparing outcomes data, e.g. student attrition, progression, completion
- **Structures** – comparing company structure, e.g. academic staffing, corporate services, governance

Benchmarking will be undertaken using one or both of the following two methods:

- **Desktop audits** – audit of publicly available information and data, including but not limited to:
 - Providers' websites
 - Higher education data from various sources including the Department of Education, Skills and Employment and the OECD

- Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT).
- **Formal arrangement** – formalising a benchmarking agreement
 - With a provider offering courses in similar disciplines
 - Through participating with QILT or similar industry/peak body arrangement.

Procedure

There are four steps in the benchmarking process:

- **Step 1 Identification** – identify areas for improvement and/or good practice, e.g. entry requirements, course learning outcomes
- **Step 2 Methodology** – define the type of and method for benchmarking, e.g. course benchmarking using a provider's website or commence a formal benchmarking agreement, which will require the Academic Board's (**AB**) approval
- **Step 3 Resourcing** – confirm availability of appropriately qualified and experienced academic staff to undertake the benchmarking exercise
- **Step 4 Reporting** – report benchmarking outcomes to management or relevant governing body, including identifying improvement and action plans.

A schedule of proposed benchmarking activities is detailed in Appendix 1.

Responsibilities

All staff are expected to:

- Undertake benchmarking activities in accordance with this policy, when requested,
- Be aware of developments in benchmarking practices, and
- Implement improvements arising from benchmarking in their areas of responsibility.

The Dean:

- Oversees benchmarking activities, and
- Reports to the AB on outcomes from benchmarking, including recommending actions for improvement.

The AB:

- Setting institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes, and
- Monitors the implementation of actions to improve AIFE's operations.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure, the following terms are defined as follows:

Benchmarking	A structured and collaborative quality assurance process for comparing practices, processes or performance outcomes ¹
Governing body	Includes the Board of Directors and the AB, and their sub-committees

Version history

Version #	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	New Policy	Academic Board	22 March 2022
2.0	Update header and footer	Academic Board	

Additional Information

Policy Status	Approved
Policy Owner	Dean
Next Review Date	3 years from Approval Date
Related Internal Documents	Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure Course Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure Stakeholder Feedback Policy and Procedure
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2022	Standards 1.3.5, 2.2.3, 5.3.4, 5.3.7, 6.3.1b and 6.3.2e
Other legislative or regulatory instruments	Not applicable

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¹ This definition is adapted from TEQSA's definition, as contained in the TEQSA *Guidance Note: External Referencing (including Benchmarking)*, Version 2.5, 16 April 2019

Appendix 1 – Proposed Benchmarking Schedule

Category	Description	Frequency	Type	Responsible person	Responsible body
Structures	Academic appointments including staff qualifications, professional development and promotion processes	At least once every 3 years	Desktop audit	Dean	Academic Board
			Formal arrangement		Board of Directors
Structures	Academic staff-to-student ratio	At least once every 2 years	Desktop audit	Dean	Academic Board
			Formal arrangement		Board of Directors
Structures	Electronic learning resources and infrastructure	At least once every 2 years	Desktop audit	Dean	Board of Directors
			Formal arrangement		Board of Directors
Structures	Governance bodies structure and Terms of Reference	At least once every 2 years	Desktop audit	Dean	Board of Directors
			Formal arrangement		Board of Directors
Process	Monitoring quality assurance mechanisms	At least once every 2 years	Desktop audit	Dean	Academic Board
			Formal arrangement		Board of Directors
Course	Course and unit design	Annual	Desktop audit	Dean	Academic Board
		5 year comprehensive reviews	Formal arrangement		Learning and Teaching Committee

Category	Description	Frequency	Type	Responsible person	Responsible body
Course	Moderation, e.g. external double marking of samples of assessment items	At the end of each teaching period			Academic Board Learning and Teaching Committee
Course Student outcomes	Student feedback and satisfaction	At the end of each teaching period	Desktop audit (e.g. QILT) Formal arrangement	Dean	Academic Board
Student outcomes	Student performance such as grade distribution, progression rates, retention rates, attrition rates and completion rates	Annual	Desktop audit Formal arrangement	Dean	Academic Board Learning and Teaching Committee
Policies and frameworks	All policies, academic and non-academic	At least once every 3 years	Desktop audit	Dean Chief Executive Officer	Academic Board Board of Directors
Student outcomes	Graduate outcomes and course satisfaction	Annual	Desktop audit Formal arrangement	Dean	Academic Board Learning and Teaching Committee
Process	Grievances and appeals, number, type, days to resolution, number of external appeals	At least once every 3 years	Formal arrangement	Dean	Academic Board

Category	Description	Frequency	Type	Responsible person	Responsible body
					Board of Directors
Process	Academic misconduct cases, type, frequency	Annual	Formal arrangement	Dean	Academic Board Board of Directors