

## Benchmarking Policy

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### 1. PURPOSE

The Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce (the Institute) seeks to continually improve its position as a higher education provider by undertaking various external referencing and benchmarking activities.

The Institute appreciates that benchmarking is important to enable it to identify comparative strengths and weaknesses with other quality Institutions and higher education providers. The Institute also believes that benchmarking can help it develop improvements in academic quality, bring a fresh approach, allow improved decision-making through referencing like-for-like comparative data, and bring an external focus and clarity to what might otherwise be considered internal activities.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees and staff members of the Institution, members of governing bodies including the Council and the Academic Board, and any other contractor or otherwise who is given any task in relation to benchmarking of the Institution.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Academic Quality Assurance** is a framework that provides principles and processes aimed at ensuring the academic quality in terms of overall strategic planning and policy.

**Benchmarking** is the process for comparing practices, processes or performance outcomes between the Institution and other higher education providers. It enables valid and relevant comparisons and provides an external reference point for the achievement of educational standards.

**Best practice benchmarking** is where a provider selects a comparator or comparators thought to be at the forefront in the area to be benchmarked.

**Course benchmarking** is the benchmarking of an accredited course including its design and student performance (including evaluation and review as well as student attainment).

**Course and Unit Review** is the evaluation of an academic program, or a unit within a program, including its structure, learning outcomes, currency of curriculum and quality of teaching and learning including assessment.

**Feedback** is information and evidence used to reflect upon and improve performance. It is gained from processes such as consultation, questionnaires and surveys and is regularly sought from student groups and relevant professional, accrediting and employer groups.

**Organisational benchmarking** is where comparisons are made at an organisational level. This can be at the institutional or school level and might include partnering with another higher education institution to engage in the benchmarking.

**Outcomes benchmarking** is the process of comparison of outcomes data, particularly student outcomes (such as attrition and retention, progression and completion rates).

**Process benchmarking** involving comparisons of particular processes and practices (such as entry criteria, grade distributions and criteria for academic related appointments).

## **4. PRINCIPLES**

### **4.1 Objectives and legislative framework for benchmarking**

The exercise of undertaking various external referencing and benchmarking activities stems from the Institute's obligations under the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (Cth) to, amongst other things:

- a) Monitor, review and improve all accredited courses of study such that the courses are subject to periodic (at least every seven years) comprehensive reviews that are overseen by peak academic governance processes and include external referencing or other benchmarking activities (standard 5.3);
- b) Establish and implement academic governance processes and structures including assigning responsibility to set and monitor institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes (standard 6.3(1)(b)); and
- c) Establish and implement academic oversight to ensure the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training effectively, including by monitoring and initiating action to improve performance against institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes (standard 6.3(2)(e)).

### **4.2 Strategic priority for benchmarking**

The Institute utilises a range of quality assurance processes to ensure continuous improvement of the processes and outcomes that underpin academic excellence. Benchmarking is key to the Institute's quality assurance process as it provides data and information that enables comparison and evaluation of performance. Benchmarking allows the Institute to monitor standards, identify areas of best practice, as well as areas performing below requirements, and it forms the basis of quality improvements. The Institute is committed to facilitating and resourcing a consistent and robust benchmarking process covering its academic governance, its academic programs, and its academic policies and procedures.

### **4.3 Focus of benchmarking**

The Institution may use any one or multiple types of benchmarking and may undertake benchmarking to compare its performance in relation to a number of academic matters including, but not limited to the following matters:

- a) Teaching and cohort reporting;
- b) Course curriculum and credit arrangements;
- c) Student learning outcomes, assessment monitoring, attrition and retention rates,

- progression, and completion;
- d) Graduate attributes and outcomes, graduate satisfaction outcomes, graduate destinations and graduate employment;
  - e) Resources and research with other higher education providers; and
  - f) Progression to further study and selection processes.

#### **4.4 Responsibility for benchmarking**

The responsibility in relation to benchmarking activities differs depending on the nature of the benchmarking to be undertaken and will include, for instance:

- a) **Academic related matters**; it is the responsibility of the Dean, or nominee, in liaison with the Academic Board, for initiating benchmarking projects, including its timing and the approval of any mechanics in relation to the benchmarking process.
- b) **Non-academic matters**; it is the responsibility of the Vice-President of a particular function of the Institution (such as its internal, regulatory or commercial functions) in liaison with the senior management team of the Institution, for initiating benchmarking projects, including its timing and relevant details of the mechanics required to carry out any such benchmarking activity.

#### **4.5 Timing of benchmarking**

In relation to timing of benchmarking activities, it may take the course of:

- a) **Ad-hoc benchmarking**; where there is no particular reoccurrence or timing being the contributing factor to commence benchmarking activities and it is undertaken as an opportunity to do so arises;
- b) **Re-occurring and planned benchmarking**; where there is a systematic and structured manner in which the benchmarking takes place such as by reason of an annual or bi-annual anniversary of a particular issue which requires review and benchmarking undertaken;
- c) **Strategic benchmarking**; where the benchmarking correlates with another event or significant occurrence of an issue.

### **5. PROCEDURES**

All benchmarking will be undertaken in accordance with this policy and all requirements as set out in any relevant legislation, regulation and/or guideline and will be appropriately recorded and reported to ensure information is effectively implemented for the improvement of the Institution. Benchmarking can take a variety of forms and can be as straightforward as a desktop survey of relevant higher education internet websites, or may involve more formal avenues or written requests for information and agreements with another higher education provider.

See the related document *Benchmarking Procedures* for the details pertaining to the implementation of the principles inherent in this policy document.

### **6. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- i. Academic Quality Assurance Framework*
- ii. Benchmarking Procedure*
- iii. Course and Unit Development Policy*
- iv. Course and Unit Development Policy and Procedure*
- v. Moderation Policy and Procedure*

## 7. VERSION CONTROL

Historical Version	Approved by	Approval Date
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