



Benchmarking Procedure

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| Related Policy | Benchmarking Policy |
| Responsible Officer | Provost |
| Approved by | Provost |
| Approved and commenced | December 2013 |
| Review by | December 2016 |
| Responsible Organisational Unit | Office of the Provost |

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1 Objective

The objective of this Procedure is to:

- provide instructions to facilitate the implementation of the Benchmarking Policy.

The Benchmarking Procedure is also aligned to the Reviews Policy which outlines a process of review.

The Benchmarking review process is outlined in Appendix A. A benchmarking activity may include up to nine distinct stages as part of the review process.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all organisational units, all staff and all functions of the University.

3 Procedure

3.1 Stage 1 – Scope the Benchmarking Activity

When scoping the benchmarking activity consider:

- *Areas to benchmark:* Will it be a theme, process; performance, organisational behaviour or compliance requirement?
- *Nature of benchmarking:* Will it be a data comparison project only; a more detailed investigation to improve performance or a combination of both
- *Level of application:* Will it be whole of organisation or an organisational subunit (e.g. faculty, school, university institute, division, campus etc.)?
- *Nature of partnership:* Will it be an informal partnership; a formal relationship which requires a Memorandum of Understanding; a membership partnership or an internal benchmarking activity across a number of organisational units?
- *Alignment to strategic purposes:* Does it align with University planning and quality improvement purposes?
- *Resourcing implications:* Who will resource the benchmarking activity?

3.2 Stage 2- Decide on Type of Benchmarking

When deciding on the type of benchmarking consider:

- No one type is better than the other-it depends on the specific context and purpose of the benchmarking activity
- Is it about the comparison of outcomes? (outcome)
- Is it about understanding University processes? (process)
- Is it for information only? (information)
- Is it to be used to improve strategic performance? (strategic)
- Is it across a range of processes? (horizontal)
- Is it about drilling down vertically layer by layer? (vertical)
- Is it about sharing and comparing information with membership groups? (functional)
- Is it comparing outcomes and processes internally? (internal)
- Is it about comparing outcomes and processes externally? (external)
- Does it include one or more of these types?

3.3 Stage 3-Select and Secure Benchmarking Partners

When selecting appropriate benchmarking partners consider:

- Partners who are recognised leaders in the area that you want to benchmark
- Alternatively, select benchmarking partners who share similar problems, outcomes or practices as you so that you both learn
- When considering external partners consider size, research/teaching emphasis, academic profile-similar disciplines taught; age of university; multi-campus based.

3.4 Stage 4- Levels of Approval and Support

Before approaching a potential benchmarking partner/partners to collaborate on a benchmarking activity consider:

- Who are the key decision makers who can endorse and progress the development of the benchmarking activity? (Heads of School, Deans, Unit Head/Director, Senior Executive, Vice Chancellor)
- For external benchmarking activity - do you require a Memorandum of Understanding or a formal agreement to be developed in collaboration with Governance and Legal?
- Advice and support on levels of approval for benchmarking is available from the Student Evaluation, Review and Reporting Unit (SERRU).

3.5 Stage 5- Develop a Project Plan

When developing a project plan for a benchmarking activity consider:

- What are the purposes/aims of the benchmarking activity?
- What is the proposed timeline for the project and action plan?
- What budget will be required?
- What is the communication plan?
- What methodologies will be used? (questionnaire, interviews, workshops)
- What is the scope of the project?
- What are the performance indicators that will be measured and compared?
- What are the good practice statements?
- What are the performance measures?
- What are the ratings?
- What is the rationale for the performance rating?
- Can you triangulate the data with other relevant data?
- Who are involved in the project? Who will coordinate the project and liaise with the benchmarking partners? What are the responsibilities of various people involved in the project?

3.6 Stage 6- Undertake a Self Review

When undertaking an internal self review of the benchmarking activity consider:

- What are the areas of good practice?
- What are the areas for improvement?
- What actions will be taken to recognise good practice and improve practice?

- How will you report on the findings of the self review of the benchmarking activity?

3.7 Stage 7- Undertake a Peer Review

When undertaking an external peer review of the benchmarking activity consider:

- What data and self review information will you share?
- Where and when the peer review will take place?
- Who will coordinate the peer review workshop?
- How will you report on the findings of the peer review?
- What actions will be taken from the peer review process?

3.8 Stage 8- Implement the Potential Improvements

When implementing an action plan on potential improvements consider:

- What are the actions from the benchmarking activity?
- Who is responsible for carrying out these actions?
- Does it carry budget implications?
- What date will these actions be completed by?
- What was the outcome of these actions?
- What are the deliverables from the benchmarking activity?

3.9 Stage 9- Report Results

When reporting results from the benchmarking activity consider:

- Who is responsible for reporting the results?
- Ensure all benchmarking activity has been reported to the Provost Office to place on the benchmarking register.

4 Definitions and Acronyms

| Term/Acronym | Definition |
|----------------------------|---|
| Benchmarking | The systematic comparison of an organisation's inputs, systems, processes and outputs both against those of external bodies and internally against previously collated in-house data. |
| Organisational Unit | Faculty, School, Centre, University Institute, other University Entity, Division, Section or University Business Enterprise. |

5 Supporting Documentation

- Benchmarking Policy
- Reviews Policy

6 Versioning

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| Former Version | Version 1 – Benchmarking Procedure (current document); approved December, 2013. |
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Appendix A: Benchmarking Review Process

