Benchmarking Policy

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Review	3 years from the date of approval
Policy Code	AP046
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2024.06	Academic Board	27 June 2024	27 June 2024

1. PURPOSE

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

The Institute appreciates that benchmarking is essential in identifying comparative strengths and weaknesses with other institutions and higher education providers. Benchmarking can help 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 person given any task concerning Institute benchmarking.

3. DEFINITIONS

Academic Quality Assurance is a framework that provides principles and processes to ensure academic quality is achieved through strategic planning and policy.

Benchmarking compares practices, processes or performance outcomes between the Institute and other higher education providers. It enables valid and relevant comparisons and provides an external reference point for achieving educational standards.

Best practice benchmarking is where a provider selects an external 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, review, and 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 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 benchmark.

Outcome benchmarking compares outcomes data, particularly student outcomes (such as attrition and retention, progression and completion rates).

Process benchmarking involves 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 5.3.1);

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 methods and outcomes that underpin academic excellence. Benchmarking is critical 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 and 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, programs, and policies and procedures.

4.3 Focus of benchmarking
The Institute may use any one or multiple types of benchmarking. It may undertake benchmarking to compare its performance in several academic areas, including, but not limited to, the following:

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

a) **Academic-related matters** are the responsibility of the Deputy President (Education) or nominee, in liaison with the Academic Board, to initiate benchmarking projects, including timing and the approval of any mechanics concerning the benchmarking process.

b) **Non-academic matters** are the responsibility of the director of a particular function of the Institution (such as its internal, regulatory or commercial functions) in liaison with the senior management team of the Institute for initiating benchmarking projects, including timing and relevant details of the mechanics required to carry out any such benchmarking activity.

4.5 Timing of benchmarking

The timing of benchmarking activities may take the form of:

a) **Ad-hoc benchmarking** undertaken as an opportunity to do so is where no particular re-occurrence or timing is the contributing factor to benchmark*;*
b) **Re-occurring and planned benchmarking** is systematic and structured around processes, events or dates;
c) **Strategic benchmarking** correlates with another event or significant occurrence of an outcome*.*

5. PROCEDURES

All benchmarking will be undertaken according to this policy and all requirements in any relevant legislation, regulation, and/or guideline. It will also be appropriately recorded and reported to ensure that the information gained is effectively implemented to improve the institution. Benchmarking can take various forms and 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 about implementing 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
2021.06	Academic Board	24 June 2021

The Deputy President (Education) oversees the implementation and compliance of this policy. Please contact the Deputy President's office for any enquiries or clarifications related to this policy.