

BENCHMARKING POLICY

Policy/Document Approval Body:	Governance Board
Date Created:	26 February 2010
Policy Custodian:	Dean of Engineering
Policy Contact:	Dean of Engineering
File Location:	W:\Data - ALL.Standard\Policies and Procedures\EIT Policies and Procedures
Location on EIT website:	http://www.eit.edu.au/organisation-policies
Review Period:	Three years from date of commencement
Revision No:	8
Date of Revision:	23 August 2021
Date Approved:	7 October 2021
Date Commenced:	14 October 2021

1.0 Purpose

This policy provides a framework for benchmarking for key personnel, in charge of processes, with an external standard for measuring performance and thus to help identify where opportunities for improvement lie.

To establish this policy, members of the Governance Board and Academic Board undertook a review of the Australian Universities Quality Agency report on Academic Governance and Quality Assurance: Good Practice for NSAs which was their basis for developing a detailed policy on benchmarking.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all members of EIT's higher education community.

3.0 Objectives

This policy outlines the key performance indicators that will be used by the Engineering Institute of Technology (EIT). These indicators tie in with the development of EIT's Strategic Plan.

In a simple way, benchmarking can be understood to work towards answering the following questions:

- What particular parameter do we want to improve?
- How well are we doing compared to others?
- Who is doing it the best?
- How do they do it?
- How can we learn from how they do it better to us, to our institution?
- How do we apply these lessons practically and in a sustainable way to our institution?

4.0 Implementation

EIT is committed to undertaking benchmarking exercises as part of its continuous improvement cycle. Benchmarking will generally be undertaken as a comparative analysis in the first instance. The results of this analysis may require EIT to embark on a more investigative approach to understand the reasons for the level of performance and prepare an adequate response to the areas that require improvement.

EIT acknowledges and references TEQSA's Guidance Note External Referencing v2.5 that states that the *'main focus of external referencing in the HES Framework is on comparisons of courses or units of study and of student achievement to inform improvements. This does not preclude a provider from undertaking much broader comparative activities across any aspect of its operations, including through benchmarking.'*

In light of TEQSA's Guidance Note, EIT will use the following benchmarking areas as recommended by McKinnon, Walker & Davis (2000), to systematically compare data and continuously improve EIT across a broad range of comparative activities as required.

- Governance, planning and management (Governance & Leadership/University-wide planning/clearly defined lines of responsibility/organisational climate).
- External Impact (reputation/competitiveness).
- Finance and Physical infrastructure (operating result/commercialisation: Net Return on Equity/Strategic Asset Management/Space Management/IT&T Infrastructure).
- Learning and teaching (learning and teaching plan/Fitness of course/Student satisfaction/Employability of Australian Graduates).
- Student support (Student Administrative services).
- Library and information services (Contribution to teaching & learning/Provision of support for research).
- Internationalisation (culture/balanced onshore international student courses).
- Staff (Strategic HR Planning/Career Development & Staff Effectiveness).

4.1 Non-academic benchmarking

EIT will undertake benchmarking of its non-academic performance against KPIs listed in EIT's Strategic Plan in accordance with the timeframes specified.

4.2 Academic benchmarking

There are many forms of benchmarking such as:

- External marking and use of external examiners.
- Student performance data comparisons.
- Moderation and validation.
- Teaching performance.
- Peer reviews of entire courses to quality assure academic standards in teaching, scholarship and research.
- Course benchmarking for professional accreditation for an entire course.
- Alliances and collaboration to jointly achieve quality enhancement.

4.3 Process

EIT will utilise the Course Advisory Committee to undertake cyclical course benchmarking exercises; the Board of Studies to benchmark student outcomes such as attrition and progress rates; and other committees as required.

The Academic Board will set the schedule for benchmarking and be responsible for approving benchmarking proposals.

Ongoing review of higher education courses, student academic performance and learning and teaching performance is outlined in the Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure.

4.4 Challenges

With the assistance of the external stakeholders, EIT is undertaking the necessary comparative analysis to set up useful and realistic benchmarks and to be able to respond adequately to the above questions. The key issues and aspects of benchmarking are:

- Reliable comparative data.
- Trust and building relationships.
- Benchmarking for improvement.
- Demonstrating improvement.

4.5 Key Performance Indicators

In general, key performance indicators are often developed for comparison with conventional residential campus type institutions. Hence, care has to be taken in interpreting these performance indicators to include both online and face-to-face (blended) delivery modes for engineering courses at EIT. EIT will also take account of these differences when undertaking benchmarking exercises.

EIT will use the benchmarks recommended by McKinnon, Walker & Davis (2000) as a basis for continuous quality improvement.

5.0 Definitions

Benchmarking: is a learning process structured so as to enable those engaging in the process to compare their services/activities/products and thus identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses as a basis for self-improvement and/or self-regulation.

Benchmark: A point of reference against which something may be measured.

TEQSA: Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

6.0 Related policies and procedures

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

- Benchmarking Procedure
- EIT Strategic Plan
- Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy
- Course Review and Quality Assurance Procedure

7.0 References:

- Academic Governance and Quality Assurance: Good Practice for NSAs. (2010). Melbourne, Australia: Australian Universities Quality Agency.
- TEQSA (2019). Guidance Note External Referencing v2.5
- Guidelines for Improving learning and teaching through collaboration, benchmarking and alliances.(n.d.). Retrieved September 10, 2010, from
 - http://sydney.edu.au/learning/quality/docs/guidelines_for_benchmarking.pdf
- McKinnon, K.R., Walker, S.H. & Davis, D. (2000). Benchmarking: A manual for Australian Universities. Higher Education Division. Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

8.0 Accountabilities

The Governance Board has oversight of all benchmarking activities, but specifically non-academic benchmarking activities.

The Academic Board has been delegated responsibility for oversight of academic benchmarking activities and the quality of higher education courses. It may decide to sub-delegate benchmarking activities to the Board of Studies, Course Advisory Committee or Learning and Teaching Committee on an as-need basis. The Academic Board will provide reports to the Governance Board on benchmarking outcomes.

As a general rule, the Board of Studies will undertake any ongoing benchmarking activities and the Course Advisory Committee will undertake specialised course benchmarking exercises, such as those conducted for renewal of registration and accreditation with TEQSA.

The Dean will ensure that all academic staff participate and cooperate with the relevant committees as required.

The Governance Board is responsible for review and approval of this policy.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and EIT's community via the website and other publications.