TABOR

BENCHMARKING POLICY

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Related Documents:	**Academic Quality Assurance Committee** **Course Development, Renewal and Accreditation Policy** **Moderation Policy**	
Responsible Officer:	Academic Director	
Review:	Academic Quality Assurance Committee	

Any person who requires assistance in understanding any aspect of this document should contact the Responsible Officer.

1.   Overview

"Benchmarking can be defined as a structured, collaborative learning process for comparing practices, processes or performance outcomes" (TEQSA, *Guidance Note: External Referencing*). This policy provides the framework by which Tabor will undertake benchmarking activities, in order to assure and improve the College's academic and non-academic practices, processes and performance outcomes.

2.   Scope and Applications

Tabor regularly engages in three levels of benchmarking:
   i)   Whole of institution: this typically involves benchmarking activities carried out with parties with whom Tabor has an existing benchmarking relationship (e.g., the HEPP-QN or IHEA) or which involves the utilisation of publicly accessible data, e.g. QILT. This is focussed on improving institutional (including teaching and learning) practice.
   ii)   Course: benchmarking takes place within the annual, minor (typically three years post accreditation of the award) and major (typically five years post accreditation) course reviews.
   iii)   Unit: benchmarking takes place as part of the unit review process, which occurs within the major course review. Individual units are also subject to benchmarking as part of the College' regular external post moderation of grading process. Along with ii), this form of benchmarking is undertaken for the purposes of curriculum development.

Tabor may also engage in a fourth level of benchmarking – at the faculty level – but this occurs irregularly, on an "as needs" basis.
Other forms of benchmarking regularly take place as part of the College's day-to-day operations (e.g., in the development of policies, processes and plans).

3. Policy Principles

    3.1 Benchmarking is a valuable *tool for institutional comparison and improvement*, allowing Tabor to identify and address areas that could be changed, developed, and enhanced.

    3.2 Benchmarking is a valuable *tool for quality assurance*, allowing Tabor to measure and assess the effectiveness of its teaching and learning practices against those of the higher education sector generally.

    3.3 Benchmarking is a valuable *tool for compliance*, allowing Tabor to demonstrate its fulfilment of the HESF, especially 5.3 and 6.3.

4. Procedures

    4.1 <u>Whole of institution benchmarking</u>

        a. The College will normally engage in at least one whole of institution benchmarking project per year.

        b. Whole of institution benchmarking projects are typically coordinated via a third party (e.g., IHEA, HEPP-QN, etc.), with whom Tabor has formalised benchmarking agreements.

        c. Decisions regarding which project/s the College will pursue will be made by the Academic Director in consultation with relevant parties (e.g., Dean of Students).

        d. The Academic Director will confirm Tabor's involvement in the project with the coordinating organisation and facilitate the benchmarking process via the formation of a Benchmarking Project Team.

        e. The Benchmarking Project Team will be led by a Project Leader. The Project Leader will be a senior member of Tabor staff with responsibility for the benchmarking area.

        f. The Project Leader, in collaboration with the Registrar, will be responsible for providing the coordinating organisation with the required data and being involved in any meetings called by the coordinating organisation as part of the project.

        g. The Project Leader will be responsible for producing a response to the published results of the benchmarking project. This response, including any recommendations for improvement, will be tabled at the Academic Board, who may request the development of an implementation plan.

        h. In addition to specific benchmarking projects, the College will undertake regular benchmarking using publicly available performance data (e.g., QILT).

        i. This will be tabled at Academic Board as part of the annual report on the College's achievement of its academic targets.

    4.2 <u>Course benchmarking</u>

        a. Course benchmarking takes place annually as part of the Faculty Annual Review.[1] This usually focuses on key performance data, such as attrition rates, retention rates, progression rates, and completion rates.

        b. The Registrar and Academic Director will provide Heads of Program with the data sets they need to complete this activity.

        c. Furthermore, course benchmarking takes place at two key points in the course life-cycle: within the minor and major reviews.

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[1] Faculty Annual Reviews are not completed in those years where a minor or major review is undertaken or the year following the major review.

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Page 2 of 3

d. At a minimum, course benchmarking involves the Head of Program reviewing the course structure and learning outcomes with:
   (i)   the current version of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF),
   (ii)   national and international comparators. The national and international comparators should involve at least one equivalent private higher education provider and one Australian university.
   (iii)   relevant professional bodies or associations.
   (iv)   key stakeholders who are able to speak to the relevant professional and industry standards.
e. Suggestions for change to the course structure or learning outcomes should be communicated to the **Academic Quality Assurance Committee** for their review and approval, as per the College's **Course Development, Renewal and Accreditation Policy**.
f. Any material changes to course structure and any changes to course learning outcomes should be reviewed by the Academic Board and forwarded to TEQSA as a Material Change notification.

4.3 Unit benchmarking
   a. Tabor engages in two forms of unit benchmarking.
   b. All units are reviewed and benchmarked as part of the major course review process, which takes place five years post (re)accreditation of the award.
   c. Individual units are also benchmarked as part of the College's regular external post moderation of grading process.
   d. This involves an external academic reviewing the unit learning outcomes, work for assessment, and bibliography. For further details, see the College's **Moderation Policy**.

4.4 Communication
   a. The outcomes of benchmarking activities will be tabled at **Academic Board**.
   b. The Academic Board may refer reports to the College's **Scholarship Committee** to implement any recommendations.
   c. A summary of benchmarking activities will be provided to the Board of Governors as part of the Chair of the Academic Board's Annual Report.

5. Definitions
See Global Definitions

6. Communication and Training
6.1. The Academic Director will ensure that all Deans of Faculties are advised of and trained in the requirements of this policy and the policy will be published in the Tabor Policy Repository

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Page 3 of 3