BENCHMARKING PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

This document sets out CG Spectrum Institute's (CGSI) procedures for benchmarking standard operating practices and processes, organisational policies, course content and academic performance. This document is aligned with the CGSI Benchmarking Policy.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all CGSI benchmarking activities.

DEFINITIONS

Benchmarking involves the systematic and regular comparison of CGSI's courses, and quality assurance practices and processes, with that of other relevant higher education providers, to inform continuous quality improvement.

Benchmarking activities can encompass all aspects of organisational performance at the institutional, faculty, course and subject level; comparison of standard operating processes and practices; comparison of data on student performance and outcomes data; student evaluation and feedback data; and/or best practice benchmarking. Benchmarking can therefore include admission criteria and processes, course design, curriculum content, student performance, learning outcomes of courses and subjects, assessment, staffing profile, selection and performance, course information for prospective students, the student experience, and graduate outcomes.

Scheduling of benchmarking activities

There are various types of benchmarking activities, and these will be undertaken according to various timelines:

- Ad-hoc benchmarking: where benchmarking is a short, one off comparative exercise.
- Planned and recurring benchmarking: here benchmarking is regular and systematic, for example, annual or each trimester.
- Strategic benchmarking: this type of benchmarking is undertaken to explore an issue or theme and is generally part of a broader strategic discussion.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility for benchmarking activities depend on the type of benchmarking activity to be undertaken and can include:

- Academic: The Executive Dean is responsible for initiating and completing all academic benchmarking. This work must be completed in consultation with the Academic Board.

● Non-academic benchmarking: Initiation and completion of non-academic benchmarking is the responsibility of the CEO. Benchmarking projects and associated activities may be conducted by a project team appointed by the CEO, in consultation with the Executive Management Team.

PROCEDURE

Broadly, the general procedure for all benchmarking activity is to:

● Determine which area/s to benchmark
● Identify benchmarking partners
● Determine types and level of benchmarking
● Determine collaboration protocols, if necessary, including the sensitivity and confidentiality of information and processes
● Design the benchmarking process including any benchmarking tools
● Implement the benchmarking process
● Collate and review results
● Communicate results and recommendations
● Implement and monitor improvement strategies

Ad hoc benchmarking

This involves a short investigation of benchmarking activity across providers. This benchmarking activity is generally in response to an issue or a request for further insight about how an activity or process is being managed across the sector. For example, this may be a short exercise considering admissions across to a particular program, or a competitor analysis. Broadly, the steps are those developed according to the general procedure described above.

Planned and Recurring Benchmarking

COURSE REVIEW

1. A Benchmarking Review of organisational and academic processes will be conducted every three years.
2. The Benchmarking Review will consider the following matters:
   ● admission processes, including requirements, qualification verification mechanisms, English language requirements, granting of advanced standing and credit transfer, and student cohort analysis and tracking of equity groups
   ● the fit between student need, demand and profile and CGSI's course offerings, based on student enrolment statistics, market research, employment opportunities, graduate outcomes, and analysis

- critical review and assessment of course design, including the range and diversity of subjects within a course, the course structure and currency of the knowledge base
- analysis of staffing profiles and staff to student ratios and student evaluation feedback on quality of teaching and curriculum
- the adequacy and appropriateness of course-related information provided to students
- ongoing evaluation of modes of study, course delivery methods and use of technology
- alignment between assessment activities and student performance, course learning outcomes and graduate attributes
- comprehensive data analysis (based on student evaluation data) that indicates significant trends in retention, attrition and progression, and student needs for academic support; and
- analysis of graduate outcome data and feedback from other stakeholders.

Process

1. The Learning and Teaching Committee will approve terms of reference for academic benchmarking activities in accordance with the Benchmarking Policy.
2. The Dean Learning and Teaching will consult with staff and compile a list of suitable benchmarking partners.
3. The Executive Dean or delegate will arrange benchmarking meetings and exchange of data with benchmarking partners.
4. In some benchmarking exercises Project Team may be established which will work in collaboration with benchmarking partners to compare courses, curriculum, student outcomes, staffing profile and organisational quality processes.
5. A Benchmarking Review Report may be developed to highlight significant similarities and differences with benchmarking partners, and to make recommendations for improvements to CGSI courses, student supports and organisational processes, on the basis of identified strengths and/or weaknesses and note the date the benchmarking was carried out.
6. Where major benchmarking reviews of courses are conducted, a final Summary Report will be presented to the Academic Board, and will include recommendations as appropriate for course, subject/s, and organisational improvements, for the Board's consideration and endorsement.
7. The Executive Dean and Learning and Teaching Committee are responsible for implementing the Academic Board's decisions about the Report and its recommendations.

STRATEGIC BENCHMARKING

Strategic benchmarking can be part of a broader initiative that CGSI may conduct and could, for example, be one component of a broader strategic project. For example this could include background research on the development of a program in a new field of education and may involve, competitor analysis, both national and international and a consideration of admissions and course structures of courses across a range of providers. Broadly, the steps should follow the procedures outlined above.

RELATED

Benchmarking Policy
Quality Assurance Framework
Course Design Development and Approval Policy
Course Design Development and Approval Procedure

Version Control

Document: Benchmarking Procedure		
Approved by: Academic Board		**Date Approved**: November 30, 2023
Version: V3.1	**Replaces Version:** V3	**Next Review:** 2025
3.0	Changes made to address changes to organisational structure, expansion of courses and online delivery mode	
V2.1	Minor edits and logo	