


POLICY		
<p>Ref. to Legislative Frameworks:</p> <p>HESF2021: Standard 1.3 & 5.3</p> <p>SRTO2015: Standard 3.2</p> <p>National Code 2018: Standard 14</p>	Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement	
Version: 1.2	Policy Owner: Academic Board	Issued on: 02/06/2023 Review by: 02/06/2025

Revision History

Current Version	Description of Change	Policy Developer	Effective Date
1.2	Updated to HESF 2021	Compliance Manager and Academic Dean	02/06/2023
1.1	Updated the content to align with the revised Institutional Quality Assurance Framework Updated references to National Code 2018	Academic Dean	28/12/2017

PURPOSE

AAPoly's benchmarking focuses on performance standards and outcomes in areas of governance, teaching and learning, quality assurance and operations. The purpose of this benchmarking policy is to state the principles underpinning a systematic approach to benchmark externally (with comparable institutions) and internally (between different campuses, different teaching periods, or similar courses) as a tool to improve the academic performance and standards of AAPoly.

POLICY STATEMENT

Benchmarking or external referencing is a key aspect of AAPoly's quality assurance and continuous improvement approach. Monitoring, reviewing and improving processes should encompass reviews against comparators, both internal and external, nationally and internationally (where opportunities avail). Benchmarking activities must be purposeful, systematic, well-managed and appropriate for the intended outcomes.

SCOPE

Benchmarking is relevant to the Higher Education (HE) courses delivered by AAPoly and is useful for the improvement of operational processes. Benchmarking can involve external benchmarking partners but can also include comparing against publicly available information and market intelligence.

DEFINITIONS

Benchmarking	A method to compare processes or outcomes externally and internally to identify exceptional performance and gaps to be addressed in achieving the best practices.
External Benchmarking	In the context of HES Framework, external referencing means a process through which a higher education provider compares an aspect of its operations with an external comparator(s) e.g., comparing the design of a course of study and/or student achievement of learning outcomes with that of a course from another provider. ¹
Internal Benchmarking	A benchmarking activity that compares operations across different campuses, varieties of timetables or similar courses.
DMAIC Model	AAPoly Institutional Quality Assurance Framework includes the utilisation of the Define-Measure-Analyse-Improve-Control (DMAIC) Model. The DMAIC Model is used in education as a tool to improve information flow, simplify and enhance the efficiencies of an academic assessment process, detect any academic problems and take decisive measures systematically.

¹ TEQSA's Guidance Note on External referencing: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/guidance-notes/guidance-note-external-referencing-including-benchmarking>

POLICY

1. AAPoly adopts a 'whole of organisation' approach to quality management. This approach seeks to dimensionally enhance and support organisational benchmarking activities by adopting the Define -Measure -Analyse- Improve- Control (DMAIC) Model.
2. AAPoly's Benchmarking scope include:
 - Organisational Benchmarking, in which comparisons are made at the organisational level;
 - Course Benchmarking, including course design and student performance;
 - Process Benchmarking, that includes comparing practices and processes; (e.g. exams, student enrolment, credit transfer, student monitoring, student support and intervention);
 - Outcomes Benchmarking, that is focused on the comparison of outcomes data such as student admission criteria, assessment tasks, student work samples, and assessment criteria. This benchmarking also includes student performance related to outcomes e.g., attrition/retention, student progress and completion rate;
 - Best Practice Benchmarking, in which AAPoly uses a comparator of similar scope for benchmarking (e.g., benchmarking of policies and procedures).
3. Benchmarking conducted by AAPoly is:
 - Implemented in support and alignment with AAPoly's vision and mission statements and graduate attributes.
 - Aimed to identify areas of strength and weakness, to introduce constructive and systematic measures to improve the Institute's practices and teaching and learning quality and standards.
 - Characterised by mutuality of interest and benefits for all parties involved.
 - Committed to continuous improvement and sharing information and good practices.
 - Respectful of any confidentiality agreements on information shared related to benchmarking with external organisations.
 - Committed to using the information provided by external organisations only for benchmarking purpose.
 - Cooperative in negotiating an agreement with external organisations on any intellectual property derived from the benchmarking studies.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Academic Board (AB) develops and maintains this policy, as well as communicates it to the Academic Dean.
- The Academic Dean communicates this policy to academic staff and ensures their understanding so that they become aware of and understand their responsibilities in the benchmarking activities.
- The Associate Dean (Education) oversees the implementation of benchmarking.

FEEDBACK

Queries or feedback about this policy should be directed to the Academic Dean through academicdean@aapoly.edu.au. The Academic Dean will respond to the written question or feedback within two (2) weeks from the receipt, unless an immediate response is required. Feedback that results in material changes will form a part of quality assurance and continuous improvement of AAPoly.

REFERENCES

Source	Document Title
Internal	Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement Procedure
	Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedure
	Course Review and Reaccreditation Policy and Procedure
	Moderation and Ratification Policy and Procedure
	Risk Management Policy and Procedure
External	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
	TEQSA Guidance Note on Academic Governance
	TEQSA Guidance Note: External referencing (including benchmarking)
	TEQSA Guidance Note on Course Design