Benchmarking Policy

Policy/Document Approval Body:	Governance & Academic 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:	6
Date of Revision:	18 February 2017
Date Approved:	15 March 2017
Date Commenced:	16 March 2017

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 NSAIs which was their basis for developing a detailed policy on benchmarking.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Institute'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 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 will use the following benchmarking areas as recommended by McKinnon, Walker& Davis (2000), to systematically compare data and continuously improve EIT.

- 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)

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.

Academic benchmarking

There are many forms of benchmarking such as:
- External marking and use of external examiners
- Student performance data comparisons
- 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.

4.1 Process

EIT will utilise the Course Advisory Committee to undertake cyclical benchmarking exercises, but may also conduct other benchmarking exercises using the Course Advisory Committee or using other persons with similar expertise.

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 teaching and learning performance is outlined in the Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure.

4.2 Challenges

With the assistance of the external stakeholders, EIT is undertaking the necessary comparative analysis to set up useful and realistic benchmarks and 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.

4.3 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.

6.0 Related policies and procedures

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

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

References: *Academic Governance and Quality Assurance: Good Practice for NSAIs.* (2010). Melbourne, Australia: Australian Universities Quality Agency.

- 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.

- *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

7.0 Accountabilities

The Governance Board has oversight of non-academic benchmarking activities.

The Academic Board has oversight of academic benchmarking activities and the quality of higher education courses. It may decide to delegate benchmarking activities to the Board of Studies or Course Advisory Committee on an as need basis.

As a general rule, the Board of Studies will undertake any ongoing benchmarking activities and the Course Advisory Committee will undertake specialised 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.