

# Benchmarking Policy and Procedure

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to guide benchmarking activities that support continuous improvement in educational delivery and outcomes. It ensures alignment with best practices and regulatory requirements, specifically addressing requirements of Clause 5.3 of the HESF 2021 and criteria B1.3.16-18.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all benchmarking activities within the institution, including those related to learning, teaching and research. It covers both internal and external benchmarking processes.

## 3. Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Benchmarking</b>	<p>is a standard or point of reference against which something can be measured by the comparison of performance data and/or policies and procedures and includes but is not limited to a desktop survey of publicly available material, formal partnering with another institution to exchange information, benchmarking of academic standards compliance through external moderation and engagement in comparative exercises brokered by an external body that engages with multiple institutions.</p> <p>Benchmarking may then be utilised to add rigor to decision-making processes at the institutional level.</p>
<b>External referencing</b>	<p>a process of comparison of an aspect of operations with an external comparator(s) that includes monitoring, review and improvement processes. e.g., benchmarking, peer review and moderation.</p>

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## 4. Policy Statement

**4.1** The Institute commits to engaging in systematic benchmarking activities as a fundamental part of its quality assurance and improvement practices. This includes but is not limited to comparisons with comparable education providers, benchmarking against industry standards, utilizing best practice indicators, and engaging with a variety of benchmarking methodologies to ensure continuous improvement and adherence to national and international standards of excellence. The institution recognizes the value of diverse benchmarking. Activities include internal reviews, external comparisons, and sector-wide studies, to foster innovation, enhance student outcomes, and maintain the highest standards of education delivery.

**4.2** The Institute will use benchmarking as a quality improvement strategy and part of the Institute's continuous quality assurance cycle, a process that involves the Institute monitoring its relative performance and effectiveness, identifying gaps, establishing new approaches to bring about improvements, informing planning and goal setting, establishing priorities for change and resource allocation, and following through with the evidence-based improvement processes. It is also used as a means of comparing the Institute's performance and/or standards with those of its peers.

**4.3** The Institute may use the following types of benchmarking:

- Sector benchmarking (e.g., through the Australian Council for Private Education and Training)
- Organisational benchmarking (partnering with other providers for mutual benefit)
- Course benchmarking (course design, evaluation and review, curriculum and student attainment) – generally used in course reviews and TEQSA / professional society accreditation submissions, and may involve benchmarking against national / international curriculum standards as well as with other providers.
- Discipline-specific benchmarking (sector wide, or with specific other providers)
- Process and academic standards benchmarking (including, for example, minimum acceptable entry criteria, student grade distributions and criteria for academic appointments)
- Outcomes benchmarking (attrition, progression and completion rates)
- Best-practice benchmarking against publicly recognized industry leaders.

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**4.4** The Institute will use learning and teaching benchmarking for purposes such as:

- cohort reporting
- assessment monitoring
- graduate attributes
- learning outcomes
- course curriculum
- credit transfer arrangements
- resource provision to students
- use of different delivery modes
- progression to further study
- rating of professional bodies
- selection processes.

## **5. Procedure**

Benchmarking activities shall be planned, executed, and reported systematically, following the guidelines provided in this policy. This includes identifying benchmarking partners, collecting and analyzing data, and implementing action plans based on benchmarking outcomes. The Benchmarking Subcommittee of Academic Board has delegated oversight of operational aspects of benchmarking activities.

**5.1** There are six phases of benchmarking:

1. Develop concept - deciding what type of benchmarking to use, how to undertake it and with whom.
2. Plan & design - scoping the benchmarking exercise, its timelines and deliverables.
3. Self-review - identification of stakeholders, collection of evidence and data.
4. Peer review - by workshop or other means as appropriate.
5. Communicate and implement improvements - report to appropriate body or manager and allocate responsibility for implementation of recommendations
6. Evaluate and Review the effectiveness of changes made in response to recommendations.

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## 6. Responsibilities

The Board of Directors, Academic Board and the Executive Management Committee are responsible for leading the key strategy of institutional organisational change and as a consequence will share responsibility for oversight of benchmarking activities.

The Benchmarking Subcommittee (BSC) of Academic Board is responsible for the operational oversight of benchmarking at MIT, and reports on its meetings and the outcomes of benchmarking exercises to the Academic Board through a standing agenda item. The BSC is scheduled to meet at least 3 times a year.

## 7. Implementation and communication

This policy and procedure will be implemented and communicated through the Institute via:

- Announcement on the Institute's webpage;
- Internal circulation to staff; and
- as part of Staff professional development and meetings.

## 8. Documentation and Reporting

The rigorous documentation of benchmarking methodologies and outcomes is imperative. It is essential that reports are meticulously prepared and subjected to regular scrutiny, with the outcomes assimilated into the operation of the institution's Quality Assurance Framework for continuous enhancement and strategic planning endeavours.

### Reporting Protocol

Upon completion of a specific benchmarking project, a comprehensive report will be prepared that encapsulates the findings, insights, and recommendations derived from these initiatives. Stakeholders should be engaged in the reporting process, and MIT will ensure confidentiality and data protection. The report will be received by the Benchmarking Subcommittee, and then by Academic Board, which has the responsibility to monitor commitments resulting from the project.

The Academic Board will monitor outcomes to ensure that the insights from benchmarking reports are actively used in decision-making processes to foster a culture of continuous improvement.

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## Frequency of reporting

- Annual Reporting: A comprehensive annual benchmarking report is produced and presented to the Academic Board, and then the Board of Directors for a broad overview of performance against key indicators and strategic objectives. This aligns with the institution's strategic planning cycles - refer to MIT's Accountability Framework.
- Quarterly or bi-annual reporting: For critical performance areas, more frequent reviews may be required to help with timely adjustments and to maintain focus on priority areas such as course or student performances. At each Academic Board meeting, there is a report on benchmarking activities undertaken since the previous meeting. In particular, three or four times a year, minutes of the Benchmarking Subcommittee are tabled, and significant aspects discussed.
- Ad Hoc Reporting: In response to significant changes in the external environment (e.g., regulatory changes, technological advancements), ad hoc reports may be necessary to assess the impact on the institution and adjust strategies accordingly.

## 9. Review and Continuous Improvement

The feedback from benchmarking activities will be used to inform ongoing improvements to educational delivery and outcomes ensuring its adherence to best practices, innovation, and compliance with relevant standards.

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