Procedure Name	BENCHMARKING PROCEDURE
Procedure Number	**G015_PR (Governance)**
Purpose	• To ensure a common understanding of benchmarking • To clarify the benchmarking approach to be used and • To describe the requirements for benchmarking with nominated comparators.
Scope	Benchmarking is a means of comparing Whitehouse Institute of Design, Australia's (Whitehouse) performance and/or standards against best practice and performance in the higher education sector. It allows Whitehouse to monitor its relative performance, identify areas for improvement, set goals, discover new approaches to bring about improvements, establish priorities for change and resource allocation and follow through with change processes that are evidence based.
Procedure	Whitehouse recognises that benchmarking activities are an on-going process of comparison conducted specifically for quality enhancement purposes. All benchmarking activities contribute to continual improvement of Whitehouse's processes, performance and outcomes. Benchmarking is an integral part of Whitehouse's quality assurance cycle.

1. Timing

    Whitehouse will conduct an annual benchmarking exercise and may choose to conduct themed benchmarking exercises as required.

2. Processes and Outcomes

    Whitehouse's benchmarking activities will be focused on both processes and outcomes in order to support its goal of continual improvement.

    2.1. **Processes** are inter-related activities that produce outcomes. They include methods and projects. Theses benchmarks are generally attributes of good practices i.e. they are qualitative in nature.

    2.2. **Outcomes** are the changes that occur as a result of the processes. Outcomes data are generally quantitative in nature.

    2.3. Qualitative and Quantitative

    Whitehouse benchmarking activities go beyond collecting and comparing benchmarking data, it considers it to be a qualitative process as well, focusing on trying to identify the specific practices responsible for the high performance, understanding how these practices work, adapting and applying it to the organisation, engaging and discussing with valued partners and implementing improvements.

    Benchmarking may also provide indicative date for potential educational partners.

    2.4. Whitehouse adopts the TESQA Guidance on benchmarking types which include (but not limited to):

    - Organisational benchmarking
    - Course benchmarking
    - Process benchmarking

- Outcomes benchmarking
- Best practice benchmarking

3. **Benchmarking Methodology**

Whitehouse recognises benchmarking programs are an on-going continual, reiterative process. It is recommended that benchmarking initiatives follow Whitehouse's quality methodology to benchmarking: Approach, Identify, Develop, Deploy, Review and Improve.

3.1. **Approach**

- Identify areas to benchmark in need of improvement – select those that are of strategic importance.
- Identify key reasons as to why Whitehouse should undertake the benchmarking exercise and why a particular approach should be employed.
- Ensure that there is management support for the benchmarking initiative.
- Select and secure adequate resource and technical support.
- Understand current process and any sub-processes that may have impact on how the process performs.
- Clearly define what to benchmark.

3.2. **Identify** and select appropriate benchmarking partners.

Selecting appropriate benchmarking partners is critical for successful benchmarking. An external benchmarking partner should:

- have a commitment to quality improvement and a 'willingness to share'
- demonstrate a record of good performance in the area(s) to be benchmarked
- for a whole-of-institution benchmarking project, a benchmarking partner should also generally
  - have compatible mission, values and objectives
  - be of a comparable size and
  - have similar discipline mix.

Whitehouse will:

- ensure all benchmarking partners are clear about what data will be shared
- formalise benchmarking agreements with partners if necessary.

3.3. **Develop** a benchmarking plan. This is a critical for identifying and agreeing on the benchmarking project's objectives, scope (as well as what is not in scope), schedule, allocation of tasks, timelines, deliverables, development of a project plan, project team, reference group and communication plan.

3.4. **Deploy**

- Implement the benchmarking plan above.
- Date Collection.

3.5 Review

3.5.1 Conduct self-review activities: This includes: planning self-review activities; identifying key stakeholders to answer particular sections; writing up institutional context statements for peer review workshops; collecting evidence from as many sources and stakeholders as possible; triangulating the evidence, using focus groups, surveys and interviews to gather data for analysis and consideration.

3.5.2 Conduct peer review activities: This may be done by way of a peer review workshop (either face-to-face and/or teleconferencing) with the benchmarking partners comparing processes and data. The key aims of the workshop will be to identify:

- areas of good practice
- areas for improvement
- areas for sharing and collaboration.

The peer review workshop will also conduct an external validation exercise to assist Whitehouse to understand the quality of its processes.

Prior to each workshop, an agenda and questions must be distributed so that both partners are adequately prepared.

3.5.3 Following each workshop the staff member responsible for conducting the workshop must:

- develop a report that outlines the data findings and recommendations for improvements or reflect and record benchmarking activities and actions for improvement in writing and
- establish a way to communicate findings to others. Discussions need to consider who is responsible for carrying out the identified improvements and whether such improvements carry significant budget implications
- reports need to be submitted to the Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

3.6 Improve

3.6.1 Implement adaptation/ improvements resulting for the recommendations based on the benchmarking sharing or best practices identified.

3.6.2 Track the progress of implementation efforts and remeasure.
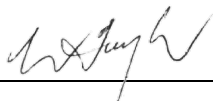
4. Evaluate and Review Procedure

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the benchmarking exercise.
- Determine what the outcomes were.
- Determine how useful the benchmarking exercise was.
- Assess whether the outcomes were implemented and how effective they were.
- Provide a report to the Academic Board and the Board of Governors on the effectiveness of the benchmarking exercise.

Benchmarking Agreements for External Reference Points

The specialisation that identifies the requirement for the respective benchmarking exercise must make a submission through the Quality Committee. Written agreements with external reference points with which benchmarking activities are taken must be

entered into and approved by any one of the Co-Executive Directors. Benchmarking initiatives should be reported to the Quality Committee. A summary report on the benchmarking activities undertaken in association with executive goals must be tabled to the Quality Committee annually.

Relevant Legislation	- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 2016 Higher Education Support Act (2003) - Australia Qualifications Framework (AQF) - TEQSA Guidance Note - Benchmarking
Key Related Documents	Benchmarking Framework Benchmarking Project Plan Benchmarking Guidelines Benchmarking Checklist
Definitions	**Benchmarking**: involves a comparative analysis with various organisations in respect to programs, performance, processes and/or services. From these information areas for improvement within Whitehouse can be identified and ideas gained on ways to achieve improvement.
Responsible Officer	Executive Director
Approval Authority/ Authorities	Board of Governors
Date Approved	10/04/2017
Date of Commencement	11/04/2017
Date for Review	11/04/2020
Documents superseded by this Procedure	Benchmarking Policy and Procedure – November 2014
Amendment History	**05/2018** Re-branding – Header & Footer only **12/2016** Policy and Procedures separated and HE and VET documentations separated. Updated formatting and minor amendments Updated Hyperlinks

Signed and dated for Whitehouse Institute Pty Ltd			
	signature	Les Taylor	30/05/2018
	Signature	Name	Date

INFORMATION FOR PUBLISHING ON POLICY REGISTER	
Category	Governance Academic (Cross reference number: A004_PR_HE_Academic)
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