

Benchmarking Policy

1. POLICY STATUS AND DETAILS

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| Policy Number | AC08 |
| Approving Authority | Academic Board |
| Date Implemented | August 2023 |
| Current Version | 3.0 |
| Date of Review | August 2025 |
| Contact Officer | Director Learning and Innovation |
| Related Policies, Procedures and Documents | <p>NIDAs Strategic Plan NIDA's Risk Management Policy NIDA Code of Conduct MOU template All NIDA policies may be subject to benchmarking All NIDA documents may be subject to benchmarking Student statistics Marketing and recruitment statistics</p> |

2. DEFINITIONS

| Term | Definition |
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| Benchmark | A point of reference against which something (quality, good performance, excellence) may be measured. (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), cited in Stella & Woodhouse 2007, p 14.) |
| Benchmarking | <p>Benchmarking is the comparison of services, activities and/or products with those of others engaged in similar endeavours or internally against previously collated data in order to identify comparative strengths and weaknesses as a basis for self-improvement.</p> <p>Types of benchmarking activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organisational benchmarking ▪ Course benchmarking ▪ Outcomes benchmarking ▪ Process benchmarking |
| Benchmarking Register | A document that contains a summary of the benchmarking activities undertaken, sortable by date, benchmarking project type and or partner. |
| Good Practice | A practice that has been proven to work well and produce quality results and therefore is a positive model to adopt in terms of continual improvement and Quality Assurance Framework goals. |

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| Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) | Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a formal, non-legally binding, agreement between two or more parties outlining the rights and responsibilities for each parties entering into a mutually respectful arrangement. |
| Performance Indicators | A measurable value demonstrating how effectively objectives and goals and missions are being achieved. |
| Qualitative | Qualitative benchmarking looks at systems and processes and indicators are attributes of good practice |
| Quantitative | Quantitative benchmarking looks at quantifiable outputs of operations such as statistical data |

3. SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy and procedures apply to all aspects of all benchmarking activities undertaken in support of the Quality Assurance Framework for NIDA's accredited courses.

This policy and procedure has rights and responsibilities as follows:

Director Learning and Innovation

- Accessibility of this policy and procedure by staff and students
- implementation of this policy
- establishing and maintaining current MOUs with identified partners
- ensuring proposed benchmarking activities are relevant and strategic

Academic Board is responsible for:

- Setting and monitoring institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes
- Receiving and providing comment/advice on benchmarking activity reports
- Suggesting areas for benchmarking opportunities where appropriate

QA and Academic Staff are responsible for:

- Undertaking benchmarking activities
- Developing and submitting reports that summarise the benchmarking activity and note areas of good practice and identify areas for continual improvement with clear recommendations for improvement strategies for consideration by management

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles and process for formal and ad hoc benchmarking activities for accredited courses, services and processes at NIDA.

5. PRINCIPLES

The principles that underlie the NIDA's policy and procedures are:

- A commitment by staff to continual improvement involving self-evaluation, reflective practice, internal collaborative consultation and external input
- Benchmarking against comparable institutions to identify comparative strengths and weaknesses and use feedback to adopt good practice and leverage opportunities for innovation and performance improvement
- Evidence based approaches to change and improvement

- Planning and identification of improvement goals is aligned to NIDA's strategic priorities.

6. POLICY

6.1 NIDA is committed to ensuring the quality and integrity of courses leading to higher education and vocational education awards. This includes systematically using benchmarking and external referencing to enable evidence-based improvements to courses and related educational and personal support services.

6.2 Is a key element in NIDA's Quality Assurance Framework

6.3 Is undertaken with appropriate national and international education providers allows NIDA to compare and evaluate its performance, monitor performance against the standards, consider good practice and ensure quality improvements.

6.4 Is undertaken in support of and alignment with NIDA's mission, values and strategic priorities

6.5 Is undertaken in such a manner as to ensure the efficient use of allocated resources

6.6 Should be an embedded practice with all areas of NIDA operation and therefore should be integrated into planning to ensure continual improvement across all aspects of the student and staff experience.

6.7 Good practice enhancements arising from benchmarking activities should be shared once the project is completed

6.8 Projects with identified partners are undertaken in a respectful and confidential manner in alignment with general accepted benchmarking practices.

Including:

- confidential handling of business sensitive information, and no publishing of data or reports without the written permission of all partners.
- use of benchmarking data should be restricted to express purpose for which it was gathered.
- The type; level and detail of information shared between partners should be comparable
- An MOU including issues of confidentiality, information use and type of data/information to be shared must be signed by all involved parties.

7. CHANGE HISTORY

| Date | Change Description | Reason for Change | Author | Version |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------|
| August 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New format ▪ Updated related legislation references ▪ Expanded definitions ▪ Restructured information | Policy Review | Director, Learning and Innovation Manager SSQA | 3.0 |

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| February 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New format ▪ Addition of principles ▪ Change to calculation of low attendance ▪ Inclusion of PMP as an intervention strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New format ▪ Re-structured it to a policy from an information sheet ▪ Expanded definitions ▪ Included principles and process | Manager, Learning & Teaching | 2.0 |
| July 2013 | New policy | | | NIDA Benchmarking Policy & Procedures |

8. CONSULTATION/BENCHMARKING

Benchmarked against policies and practice from a number of higher education providers and other sources.

Relevant policy documents from the following are gratefully acknowledged:

- Charles Sturt University
- University of Adelaide
- Curtin University

Consultation: Education Committee

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| Legislation and Regulatory Frameworks | Higher Education Threshold Standards 2021 Higher Education Support Act 2003 Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Disability Standards for Education 2005 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 ASQA General Directions |
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