



## External Moderation and Benchmarking Policy

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<b>Related Documents</b>	Academic Quality and Governance Framework Quality Assurance Framework Academic Continuous Improvement Policy Academic Continuous Improvement Procedure Course Design Policy Course Design Procedure Student Assessment Policy Student Assessment Procedure Staff Code of Conduct
<b>HESF (Threshold Standards) 2021</b>	1.4.1; 5.3.1; 5.3.2; 5.3.3; 5.3.4

### 1. Purpose

This Policy seeks to establish the requirements for external moderation and benchmarking as a core element of the Course and Unit review cycles at the Australian Institute of Higher Education Pty Ltd ('the Institute') and to ensure higher education operations at the Institute meet national standards and are comparable to other higher education institutions. This Policy is an extension of the **Quality Assurance Framework**.

### 2. Principles

Key principles informing this Policy and the associated Procedure are:

The Institute encourages benchmarking and external moderation with comparable institutions as a means of identifying comparative strengths and weaknesses, improving performance and assuring quality and standards;

The Institute will take both quantitative and qualitative approaches in its benchmarking and external moderation activities; and

External moderation and benchmarking outcomes will be recorded and reported in order to inform decision-making and improvements.

The key principles informing this Policy are embedded in the Quality Assurance Framework.

### 3. Context

This Policy has been developed in order to ensure a more coordinated, considered and systematic approach to benchmarking and external moderation activities.



#### **4. Scope**

This Policy applies to all staff members and external contributors involved in external moderation or benchmarking activities and to the external moderation and benchmarking activities.

#### **5. Definitions**

See the AIH Glossary of Terms for definitions.

#### **6. Policy details**

##### **6.1 External Moderation**

A least once every three years, the Institute will arrange for each unit of study to be externally moderated to broaden the scope and reliability of the internal moderation process. For further information on the internal moderation process, refer to the Student Assessment Policy and associated Procedure.

External moderators will review the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of each unit of study to ensure they are a consistent and reliable reflection of student achievement.

##### **6.2 Benchmarking**

The Institute will engage in four broad types of benchmarking:

Institutional benchmarking – this involves the benchmarking of the institution and departments (E.g. staff ratios, criteria for academic appointments, financial information, student support services, etc.).

Course and Unit benchmarking – this involves the benchmarking of course and unit design, learning outcomes, assessment construction and student performance.

Policy and Process benchmarking – this involves the benchmarking of the Institute’s policies and procedures and their efficiency.

Performance benchmarking – this involves the benchmarking of student outcomes (E.g. attrition, retention and completion rates).

The timings of the benchmarking activities will be agreed upon by the Dean in consultation with the Academic Board. The four broad types of benchmarking will be conducted at least once every three years.

##### **6.3 External Moderation and Benchmarking Partners**

An external moderation or benchmarking partner should:

- Have a comparable mission, vision and objectives;
- Be a comparable size with a similar student demographic;
- Offer similar courses;
- Have a commitment to quality improvement;
- Have a willingness to share; and



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- Demonstrate a record of good performance in the area(s) to be benchmarked.

#### **6.4 Confidentiality**

All information gathered as part of an external moderation and benchmarking exchange should be treated as confidential. Permission must be granted by all parties before any external communication relating to external moderation or benchmarking activities takes place.

Any breaches of confidentiality by employees of the Institute will be handled in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct.

### **7. Legislation**

This Policy and the associated Procedure comply with Higher Education Standards Framework Standard 5.3 (Monitoring, Review and Improvement), which specifies (in summary) that:

5.3.1 All accredited courses of study are subject to periodic (at least every seven years) comprehensive reviews that are overseen by peak academic governance processes and include external referencing or other benchmarking activities.

5.3.2 A comprehensive review includes the design and content of each course of study, the expected learning outcomes, the methods for assessment of those outcomes, the extent of students' achievement of learning outcomes, and also takes account of emerging developments in the field of education, modes of delivery, the changing needs of students and identified risks to the quality of the course of study.

5.3.3 Comprehensive reviews of courses of study are informed and supported by regular interim monitoring, of the quality of teaching and supervision of research students, student progress and the overall delivery of units within each course of study.

5.3.4 Review and improvement activities include regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study, including:

- a. analyses of progression rates, attrition rates, completion times and rates and, where applicable, comparing different locations of delivery, and
- b. the assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study within courses of study.

This Policy and the associated Procedure also comply with Higher Education Standards Framework Standard 1.4 (Learning Outcomes and Assessment), which specifies (in summary) that:

1.4.1 The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded and informed by national and international comparators.



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## 8. Version Control

This Policy has been endorsed by the Australia Institute of Higher Education Academic Board as at September 2022 and is reviewed every 3 years. The Policy is published and available on the Australian Institute of Higher Education website <http://www.aih.nsw.edu.au/> under 'Policies and Procedures'.

<b>Change and Version Control</b>				
<b>Version</b>	<b>Authored by</b>	<b>Brief Description of the changes</b>	<b>Date Approved:</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b>
2017-1	Registrar	New Policy	19 April 2017	20 April 2017
2020.1	Dean	Minor Updates	2 December 2020	3 December 2020
2022.1	Registrar	Updated Higher Education Standards Framework [Threshold Standard] 2021	25 May 2022	26 May 2022
2022.2	CEO/Dean	3-year review cycle, no recommended changes	28 September 2022	29 September 2022