



Benchmarking Policy

Policy Area: Academic Governance

Approval: Chairperson, Academic Council

Signature:

Date:

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The College recognises and accepts its obligation to ensure high standards of performance in teaching, learning, research and academic governance. Benchmarking with appropriate partners enables the College to compare and evaluate its performance and, in so doing, monitor standards, support good practice and make systematic quality improvements. As such, Sheridan College encourages benchmarking with comparable institutions as a means of improving performance and assuring standards.

This Policy aims to support a coherent, coordinated, and considered approach to benchmarking that is integrated with institutional planning, the establishment of performance goals and targets, and ongoing processes within the College’s quality improvement system.

2. RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Initial approval of policy and later amendments:	Board of Directors
Amendment of procedures consistent with the policy:	Academic Principal
Distribution of policy:	Academic Principal
Implementation of policy:	Academic Principal
Monitoring and compliance of policy:	Academic Council
Evaluation and recommendations for amendments:	Academic Council
Subsequent amendments to the policy:	Chairperson, Academic Council

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to benchmarking projects undertaken by the College as a whole and by its individual Schools. The Policy covers benchmarking projects initiated within the College, as well as external benchmarking projects in which the College is involved.

4. SUPERVISION

The Academic Council is responsible for monitoring, coordinating and providing operational advice on benchmarking projects and activities.

5. BENCHMARKING PRINCIPLES

Benchmarking projects undertaken by the College and any individual Faculties will:

- 5.1. serve the mutual interests and benefits of all parties;
- 5.2. support the College’s mission, vision, values, goals and strategic priorities;
- 5.3. have defined goals, outcomes, and activities;

- 5.4. be oriented towards learning from good practice and quickly implementing potential improvements;
- 5.5. be cost effective in terms of both time and required resources;
- 5.6. establish procedures regarding the exchange, use, and publication of information;
- 5.7. where possible, be conducted with partners that:
 - have compatible missions, visions, values and objectives;
 - are of comparable size; and
 - have a similar mix of disciplines, degrees and academic activities.

6. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

All benchmarking projects will be governed by an MOU that specifies:

- 6.1. procedures regarding the exchange, use, and publication of information;
- 6.2. the aims and scope of the benchmarking project;
- 6.3. the extent to which data will be shared between the partners;
- 6.4. the extent of confidentiality with those not party to the agreement. In particular, there is a need for confidentiality when there are 'commercial in confidence' situations between partners;
- 6.5. how the partners will agree the area(s) for potential improvement;
- 6.6. how the parties will handle any publications emerging from the benchmarking, including limits on the publication of outcomes;
- 6.7. a process to allow either partner to withdraw from the benchmarking project if there is:
 - a change in strategic priorities,
 - an emerging situation that brings the benchmarking partners into competition, or
 - a turnover of staff which changes available staff resources and expertise.

7. IMPLEMENTING AND COMMUNICATING FINDINGS

- 7.1. The College encourages the production of benchmarking reports that can be included in a Benchmarking Register for the benefit of the College as a whole.
- 7.2. Project findings and implementation plans will be discussed in relevant committees, and will be noted in committee minutes and reports.
- 7.3. Implementation plans should describe the actions arising from benchmarking reports, including the identification of responsibilities, resources and timelines.
- 7.4. Progress against implementation plans will be regularly monitored. Progress towards implementing improvements based on benchmarking projects, and their effect on outcomes, will also be made public as appropriate.

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8. APPENDIX: DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL RECORD

Document Title: Benchmarking Policy

Source Documents: *Adapted with permission from:*
Wesley Institute Benchmarking Policy (PO-GEN-11)

Associated Internal Documents: Quality Assurance Policy
Course Review Policy

Associated External Documents

Authorised Officer: Chairperson, Academic Council

Approved by: Academic Council

Date of Approval: 22 Jul 2015

Next Review Before: Dec 2018

Version Number	Version Date	Authorised Officer	Amendment Details
0.01	11 Feb 2013	Chairperson, Board of Directors	Draft prepared by Darren Smith for Sheridan College Board of Directors
1.00	02 Mar 2013	Chairperson, Board of Directors	Submitted to TEQSA for Sheridan College HEP registration: Attachment 6.30 Benchmarking Policy
2.00	22 Jul 2015	Chairperson, Academic Council	<p>Revised by Ray Dallin and Darren Smith on behalf of the Academic Council.</p> <p>All references to "Heads of Department" and "Principal" replaced with "Academic Principal" to reflect College organisational structure.</p> <p>All references to "College Council" replaced with "Academic Council" to reflect current title.</p> <p>Minor punctuation corrections.</p> <p>Section 2: Responsibilities and Accountabilities: New responsibility and accountability row added to table, to reflect delegation of academic governance responsibilities from Board of Directors to Academic Council.</p>