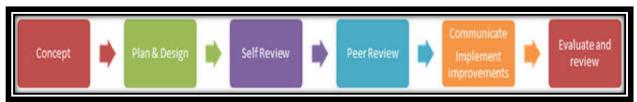Curtin University

Benchmarking Process Worksheet

Based on the TEQSA Guidance Note - Benchmarking

Six Phases of Benchmarking

Phase 1: Concept and Scope

This phase is about deciding what type of benchmarking do we use, how are we are going to undertake it and with whom? Providers need to have a shared commitment and understanding of benchmarking goals.

- Decide on the scope
  - ☐ Related to Strategic Plan priorities
  - ☐ Decide on the type/s of benchmarking to be undertaken
  - ☐ Potential improvements are worth the investment in the benchmarking exercise
- Select benchmarking partners
  - ☐ Choose a partner based on their performance in the specific area to be benchmarked
  - ☐ Collect evidence of partner performance
  - ☐ Establish willingness to enter into a benchmarking partnership
  - ☐ Confirm that the benchmarking partner is able to provide the data required
  - ☐ Determine the need and schedule site visits if required

Phase 2: Plan & Design

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

- Select the project team
  - ☐ 3-8 members is a manageable team
  - ☐ Members need to be open-minded about change and focussed on improvement

Phase 3: Self Review

This phase includes: planning self-review activities; identifying key stakeholders to answer particular sections; writing up institutional context statements for peer review workshop; 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.

- Identify the data
  - ☐ Establish how performance will be measured
  - ☐ Compare business process charts to ensure that the collected data can be used for comparison
  - ☐ Define performance indicators which are precise enough to support meaningful comparison

Phase 4: Peer Review

A common and useful element of the review process is to conduct a peer review workshop (either face-to-face and/or Skype) with the benchmarking partners comparing processes and data. The key aims of the workshop are:
- To identify areas of good practice
- To identify areas for improvement
- To identify areas for sharing and collaboration

The peer review workshop is also an external validation and calibration exercise to assist institutions to understand the quality of their processes.

- Compare data and establish reasons for differences in performance, including
  - ☐ Operating procedures
  - ☐ Leadership and management systems
  - ☐ Resource allocation
  - ☐ Evaluative systems
  - ☐ Staff policies and support
  - ☐ Organisational culture
  - ☐ Location
  - ☐ Level of competition
- Establish targets for improved performance
  - ☐ Determine targets that move performance to best practice over time
  - ☐ Assess the implications of the targets for staff and stakeholders
  - ☐ Express the targets as performance indicators
- Complete the Benchmarking Report
  - ☐ Brief outline of methodology
  - ☐ Presentation of quantitative and qualitative data
  - ☐ Results of benchmarking analysis
  - ☐ Summary of findings
  - ☐ Recommendations
- Develop an Action Plan
  - ☐ Be informed by the current Strategic Plan, Faculty Plan and School Plan
  - ☐ Address the required change in time-framed incremental steps

Phase 5: Communicate and Implement Improvements

This phase is about communicating the findings from the peer review workshop and implementing improvements. Discussions need to consider who is responsible for carrying out these improvements and do these improvements carry significant budget implications.

- Implement the approved Action Plan
  - ☐ The purpose of benchmarking is to improve so implementation is key
  - ☐ Requires sustained commitment

Phase 6: Evaluate and Review

This phase is about evaluating the effectiveness of the benchmarking exercise. What were the outcomes? How useful were they? Were they implemented? Reflect on the learnings of the benchmarking exercise to identify how the process could be strengthened.