



جامعة فهد بن سلطان
FAHAD BIN SULTAN UNIVERSITY

Benchmarking Policy

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OVERVIEW

Fahad Bin Sultan University (FBSU) is committed to delivering high-quality education to its students. To validate this commitment, FBSU benchmarks its academic and administrative processes against similar universities to assess its progress towards achieving its vision. The university emphasizes the importance of integrating Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and benchmarking into all essential areas to foster Continuous Improvement. Adherence to the benchmarking policy promotes efficient and effective evidence-based decision-making practices.

PURPOSE

The benchmarking policy aims to offer comprehensive guidance for all activities. FBSU engages in external referencing to:

- Inform planning and goal setting
- Improve decision-making practices
- Inform FBSU's policies
- Improve FBSU's procedures and guidelines, teaching and learning
- Provide an evidence base for changes and improvement
- Provide an external focus to internal activities.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to university key provisions and processes including management structures, academic programs, primary and support services, and all KPIs (program, college, administration

unit, and institutions) which are part of FBSU. The scope also entails the collection of benchmarking data from all relevant academic and non-academic departments internally or with other institutions that FBSU has an agreement of data sharing.

DEFINITIONS

Benchmark: Benchmarking is a structured, collaborative learning process for comparing practices, processes or performance outcomes. Its purpose is to identify comparative strengths and weaknesses, as a basis for developing improvements in academic quality or performance.

Key Performance Indicators: A Key Performance Indicator is a metric used to measure and evaluate the organization's success in some or all areas of engagement. When benchmarking and analysis are used in tandem, they provide evidence for assessment to guide judgments and decision-making.

KPI Analysis: Refers to a comparison and contrast of benchmarks to determine strengths and recommendations for improvement.

Benchmarking: Refers to the process of studying, comparing, and reviewing data or practices against similar data or good practices in use by other Colleges, Universities, or similar Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In academic organizations, a benchmark is a target level of performance for a given KPI or a metric. In concert with the NCAAA terminology and nomenclature practices, benchmarks are boxed into the following set of typologies:

- **Actual Benchmark:** Refers to the current level of achievement or performance indicated by the value of the KPI for a particular benchmark in the organization.
- **External Benchmark:** Refers to a benchmark from another similar institution or program with which performance is being compared.
- **Internal Benchmark:** Refers to benchmark from another entity in the same organization or institution. Comparable performance of previous year KPI may also be used as Internal Benchmark.
- **Target Benchmark:** Refers to the anticipated performance level or desired outcome (goal or aim) for a KPI.
- **New Target Benchmark:** Refers to the establishment of a new or desired performance level or goal for the KPI based on the outcome of the KPI analysis.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): An MOU is a document that records the common intent of two or more parties where the parties do not wish to assume legally binding obligations. An MOU is usually less complex and less detailed than a contract, but provides a framework and set of principles to guide the parties in undertaking a project or working arrangement.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are independent, self-governing bodies active in teaching, research, and scholarship. Higher education institutions include traditional universities and profession-oriented institutions.

POLICY

To maintain quality standards and continuous improvement initiatives across its academic entities, FBSU encourages benchmarking or external referencing with comparable institutions to monitor planning, implementation and continuous improvement. FBSU ensures a periodic review of the University's data against the comparators to allow cross-university comparisons which is crucial for developing and implementing action plans as required to maintain the University's comparability with other higher education institutions (HEIs).

For External Benchmarks, each program and institution (FBSU) should identify and use two external benchmarks:

- **Competitive - Local/National/Regional:** This allows for a form of benchmarking in terms of university's mission; size, type of institution, research productivity, staffing levels, enrolments, and any other factors.
- **Aspirational – International:** This allows for a form of benchmarking in terms of the university's mission strategically to be envisioned by Saudi Vision 2030.

The University's benchmarking process has three phases:

Phase 1: Pre Benchmarking - Each program and institution identify the local and international HEIs that have similar data and best practices. The local benchmarking partners should have a good number of analogous degree programs and roughly similar numbers of graduate and undergraduate students. Moreover, the HEI should have a reputable ranking similar to that of FBSU.

Phase 2: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - FBSU negotiates and signs a Benchmarking Agreement (MOU) with the identified institutions that should address all points of cooperation. The areas of benchmarking may include:

- Teaching & Learning Practices and KPIs
- Progression and Graduation rates
- Research Practices and KPIs
- Quality Assurance Practices and KPIs
- Curriculum Development and Review Processes
- Teaching pedagogies and Assessment procedures and practices

Based on the agreement, a detailed plan and budget are prepared.

Phase 3: Executing the Benchmarking Plan - Based on the signed agreement, the Center for Statistics and Information (CSI) at FBSU and the second party will implement the

benchmarking plan through in-person or virtual meetings. A comprehensive report must be prepared and submitted to the FBSU administration.

IMPLEMENTATION - FBSU Units' Tasks

- Center for Statistics and Information (CSI) within the Deanship of Quality and Academic Accreditation (DQAA) prepares all necessary data (Institutional and some Program Level) for KPIs to be benchmarked with other HEIs. The time period of exchanging the data is the beginning of the academic year. CSI also collaborates with academic and non-academic leaders across all levels of FBSU (i.e., institutional, college, program) to prepare Benchmarking Reports and submit them to higher management.
- Colleges/Departments/Programs: Prepare their own data that is not included in the CSI for benchmarking purposes.
- Information Technology Center (ITC): Ensures that the technology is accessible for online communication with designated partners.
- Office of President Assistant for Administrative & Financial Affairs (PAAFA): allocates budgeted funding for visiting other HEIs in case of face-to-face benchmarking meetings.
- After exchanging the institutional and non-academic benchmarking data, the Evaluation and Improvement Committee will work with the DQAA to analyze the data and formulate appropriate recommendations for continuous improvement. Moreover, the academic leaders of all programs will also collaborate with the DQAA in analyzing the data and developing recommendations for ongoing enhancement.
- The recommendations for continuous improvement shall include an action plan with a specified time frame and required resources, which will be subject to the approval of the Institutional Executive Quality and Planning Committee (IEQPC) and the University Council.