



UNIVERSITY
OF BAHRAIN

BENCHMARKING POLICY

Authority / Owner of Policy: Competitiveness and Organizational Development

Directorate

Effective: 25/03/2015

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Policy Information

Title:	Benchmarking Policy
Policy Description:	This policy describes the University's approach to referencing its practices, processes or performance outcomes with similar institutions, to achieve continuous improvement.
Policy Scope:	☐ Academic ☐ Administrative ☐ Research ☐ Student ☒ General
Policy Status	☐ New policy ☒ Revision of existing policy
Approval Authority:	University of Bahrain Council
Authority/ Owner of Policy:	Competitiveness and Organizational Development Directorate
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Related Documents:	Quality Assurance Policy, Regulations for Offering/Developing Academic Programs and Courses at the University of Bahrain, Annual and Periodic Academic Programs Review Policy, and Benchmarking Action Plan Template.

Policy Stakeholders

- | | |
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| ☐ President | ☒ Faculty members |
| ☒ Vice President | ☐ Students |
| ☒ Legal Advisor | ☒ Admin Staff |
| ☒ Deans | ☐ All University Affiliates |
| ☒ Directors | |
| ☐ All University Affiliates. | |

1 Definitions

University President:	President of the University of Bahrain.
Benchmarking:	The practice of comparing operations, performances, academic programs, and legislation with comparable institutions.
Comparable Institutions:	National, regional, and international institutions similar to the University in a variety of aspects, such as the mission, size, programs, disciplines, and cultural similarity.
Parties undertaking the benchmarking:	Staff responsible for conducting the benchmarking, as well as the executive individuals responsible for implementing and monitoring the action plans derived from the benchmarking activity.
Formal Benchmarking:	A process that requires a formal request for information from external entities, which must be approved by the University Council, regardless of whether a monetary fund is required.

2 Policy Purpose

The Benchmarking Policy aims to adopt a structured and strategic approach to ensure that the University's performance and practices align with national, regional, and international standards. This is achieved by fostering a culture of continuous improvement and ensuring that adopted processes, procedures, and legal frameworks are in line with global best practices. Additionally, this policy supports decision-makers within the University by providing them with reliable data and analytical insights derived from benchmarking results, enabling the development of institutional policies and the effective achievement of strategic objectives.

3 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all benchmarking activities conducted by the University, to ensure institutional and academic performance aligns with recognized best practices and standards.

4 Policy Statement

- 4.1 The University conducts benchmarking with comparable institutions as a strategic tool to identify strengths and areas for improvement, enhance the quality of institutional and academic performance, and ensure adherence to global best practices.
- 4.2 The principles underpinning the University's Benchmarking Policy are as follows:
 - a. Benchmarking must support the University's Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals and Initiatives.
 - b. Benchmarking must be a balanced activity in terms of cost and benefit (monetary cost, resources, staff working hours, etc.).

- c. Commitment to learning from best practices and objectively assessing strengths and opportunities for improvement in the current situation.
- d. Commitment to implementing improvement plans derived from benchmarking results to ensure continuous development and enhance performance quality.
- e. Accurate documentation of all stages and results of the benchmarking process and retaining them as a reference to support evidence-based decision-making and contribute to continuous improvement.

5 Code of Conduct

When the formal benchmarking process requires exchanging information, the following rules must be observed:

- a. **Confidentiality:** The benchmarking process is treated as a confidential procedure, and results should not be disclosed or shared with external parties without prior authorization from the University.
- b. **Usage:** Benchmarking information must not be used for any purposes that contradict the predefined objectives for which the benchmarking process was conducted.
- c. **Agreement:** A formal agreement, memorandum of understanding, or other relevant instrument may be signed as appropriate when conducting formal benchmarking with external institutions that involves structured data collection. This agreement specifies the type and level of information to be exchanged, as well as the confidentiality of the data and results obtained from the benchmarking process.

6 Policy Procedures

- 6.1 Benchmarking processes are managed and executed by the organizational entities directly responsible for the targeted areas outlined in Sections (6.3) and (6.4) of this policy, ensuring accountability and effective oversight. The university president determines the relevant entities responsible for specialized benchmarking activities that do not fall under a specific organizational body.
- 6.2 The areas listed in Sections (6.3) and (6.4) of this policy represent the key domains for which benchmarking must be conducted. The university encourages expanding the scope of these areas by incorporating new domains aligned with its evolving strategic priorities and emerging opportunities.
- 6.3 Institutional benchmarking is conducted every three years to ensure continuous alignment with global standards and best institutional practices. The following are the areas of institutional benchmarking:
- a. Comparison of governance structures, administrative operations, and leadership practices with comparable institutions to ensure effective management and decision-making.
 - b. Comparison of faculty and administrative staff-to-student ratios with comparable institutions to assess alignment with academic standards and international best practices.
 - c. Comparison of the proportion of international faculty to Bahraini faculty, along with the ratio of international students to Bahraini students, to evaluate academic diversity and engagement with global expertise.
 - d. Comparison of academic and administrative support services provided to students, including academic, psychological and career counseling, advisory services, and extracurricular activities, to adopt best practices that enhance student engagement and satisfaction.
 - e. Comparison of the integration and effectiveness of IT and communication resources in supporting and managing academic and administrative operations against comparable institutions.

- f. Comparison of library resources, laboratory facilities, and learning management systems to evaluate their modernity and quality to ensure comprehensive academic support.
- g. Comparison of community engagement programs, initiatives, and partnerships with other universities to adopt best practices that enhance student and faculty involvement.
- h. Comparison of alumni participation rates and levels of contribution with comparable institutions.
- i. Comparison of operational processes such as admission procedures and registration services with comparable institutions to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
- j. Comparison of campus infrastructure, IT resources, and sustainability initiatives based on the standards set by the Education & Training Quality Authority and the Higher Education Council, in alignment with comparable institutions.

6.4 Academic and Research Benchmarking

- a. Comparison of curriculum components for new programs and those undergoing periodic review, as mandated by the university's annual and periodic academic programs review policies, to ensure alignment with academic standards and labor market demands.
- b. Annual benchmarking of student cohorts with comparable institutions to track academic progression through various program levels and study years. This includes comparing dropout rates, retention rates, graduation rates, time-to-degree completion, and academic performance levels to support strategic decision-making aimed at enhancing program quality and student support services.
- c. Comparative analysis of graduate cohorts annually, including the number of graduates, employment rates, job levels, average salaries, and the proportion of graduates pursuing further studies, benchmarked against comparable institutions to enhance academic program development and education quality.

- d. Benchmarking graduate attributes and the university's intended learning outcomes whenever a new university strategy is adopted, ensuring alignment with global educational standards and labor market requirements by analyzing their compatibility with comparable institutions.
- e. Annual comparison of the proportion of graduate students to total student enrollment, with a particular focus on the ratio of PhD students to undergraduate students, to assess the development of advanced academic programs and their role in fostering research excellence.
- f. Annual benchmarking of the proportion of senior rank faculty members (Professors and Associate Professors) to graduate students against comparable institutions to evaluate the quality of academic supervision and the availability of experienced faculty for research mentorship.
- g. Annual benchmarking of faculty engagement in graduate programs by analyzing the ratio of faculty members to master's and doctoral students, assessing the quality of academic supervision and research support.
- h. Annual benchmarking of research productivity, including publications, citations, and patents, against comparable institutions.
- i. Annual benchmarking of the impact of academic research on industrial development, the number of applied research projects, joint initiatives with industry, and contributions to innovation and sustainable development compared to comparable institutions locally and internationally.
- j. Annual comparison of financial returns from research activities and industrial partnerships, analyzing research funding, sponsored projects, and revenues generated through industry collaboration, benchmarked against comparable institutions locally and internationally.
- k. Annual benchmarking of the proportion of research publications co-authored with international faculty from other universities to evaluate global academic collaboration and the university's integration into international research and development networks.

6.5 Benchmark Process

The parties undertaking the benchmarking activity should follow these procedures:

6.5.1 Planning:

- a. Identify the key areas for benchmarking, such as academic performance and administrative efficiency.
- b. Set clear objectives that align with the university's strategy, aspirations, and the scope of benchmarking.
- c. Establish criteria for selecting institutions for benchmarking based on factors such as size, mission, academic programs, and other relevant aspects, with a focus on choosing institutions that best align with the university's context and benchmarking objectives.

6.5.2 Data Collection and Analysis:

- a. Assess the current situation to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- b. Identify best practices and opportunities for improving existing processes.
- c. Consider the cost and potential return of implementing improvements.
- d. Determine actionable practices and opportunities as outcomes of the benchmarking process.
- e. Share the results with all relevant stakeholders within the university.

6.5.3 Implementation:

- a. Develop clear action plans that define responsibilities and establish specific timelines to address gaps or enhance existing practices.

- b. Establish a mechanism to monitor the progress of implementation according to approved action plans, with regular reporting to senior management and relevant stakeholders.
- c. Complete the Benchmarking Action Plan form for each benchmarking activity conducted by any entity within the university and submit a copy to the Competitiveness and Organizational Development Directorate via email at qaac@uob.edu.bh.

7 Contact Information

To provide further assistance in implementing this policy, or any related questions, can be directed to the Competitiveness and Organizational Development Directorate:

Email: qaac@uob.edu.bh.

Contact #: 17438083