Articulating and Comparing Standards through Benchmarking of Assessment

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Demonstrating Quality

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Contested Space
Standards and Benchmarking

Argument 1- Explicit

• Standards means uniformity, one size fits all, National curriculum

• **DEEWR have 5 sets of standards**-Provider Registration Standards, Provider Category Standards, Qualification Standards, Information Standards, Teaching and Learning Standards, Research Standards

• **Definition of standards** is a contested - professional standards (e.g. teaching standards); quality assurance standards; minimum threshold standards (what is achieved); aspirational standards (what is aspired to) and student achievement standards (what is achieved) (Carmichael, 2010)

• **An academic achievement standard** is:
  – An agreed specification or other criterion,
  – Used as a rule, guideline or definition
  – Of a level of performance or achievement. (AUQA, 2009)

• **Definition of Benchmarking** is varied across sector

Argument 2- Implicit → Explicit

• Implicit- Standards in universities are self monitoring and self regulating

• Explicit- Standards means diversity, substance, accountability and transparency

• They are a basis for comparison and collaboration

• **Universities need to become more explicit in comparison of standards**-
  • To do this:
    – Make explicit definition of standards used
    – Make explicit definition of benchmarking used
Benchmarking as a Process for Improvement through Comparison of Standards

Agreed points of comparison

– Deakin, UOW and UTAS-Cycle 1 Audits specified more benchmarking
– Comparable in terms of year established, multi-campus structure, regional presence, discipline areas and experience in AUQA audit cycles
– Benchmarking awareness and confidence at similar level
– Jackson and Lund (2000, cited in Stella & Woodhouse, 2007, p.14) define benchmarking as ‘first and foremost, a learning process structured so as to enable those engaging in the process to compare their services/activities/products in order to identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses as a basis for self improvement and/or self regulation.
– Made explicit the focus on Teaching and Learning Standards-Assessment Processes and Policies-used performance indicators from the Australian Teaching Quality Indicators Project (TQIP) on assessment (Davies, 2009)
– We also recognised our diverse contexts and academic structures from the beginning.
Universities are at Different Stages of Development towards Benchmarking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Early Implementation</th>
<th>2. Further Refinement and Alignment</th>
<th>3. Full Embedding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universities need to develop and implement a benchmarking framework, processes and partnerships as part of the Quality System</td>
<td>Universities have begun to implement benchmarking processes and partnerships but further refinement and alignment with other university processes is required</td>
<td>Universities have established benchmarking frameworks, processes and partnerships across the sector and make extensive use of external reference points and benchmarking</td>
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<td>UOW, Deakin and UTAS</td>
<td>We are currently here!</td>
<td>Key features</td>
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<td>• university wide approach aligned to strategic areas;</td>
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<td>• alignment to institutional data strategy, data warehouse and risk framework;</td>
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<td>• unit and course level benchmarking;</td>
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<td>• mechanisms for selecting appropriate institutions;</td>
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<td>• benchmarking reference groups (Booth, 2011)</td>
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References


References


