

## 1. Purpose of policy

1.1 To mandate the University's approach to external referencing activities, including peer review of assessment and benchmarking.

1.2 To support the quality of learning and teaching through external comparisons, with a view to informing improvements in line with the University Quality and Standards Framework.

1.3 To ensure that the University is meeting the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards).

## 2. Policy scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs and courses, with a particular focus on program and course design, assessment methods, and to the student achievement of learning outcomes.

This policy does not apply to national benchmarking activity undertaken by the Strategic Information and Analysis Unit.

## 3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to these procedures and are critical to its effectiveness:

**Benchmarking:** Typically consists of focused improvement through relationships with a benchmarking partner or partners but can also include comparisons against publicly-available information and market intelligence.

**External Peer Review of Assessment:**

An activity conducted with one or more higher education providers participating in reviews of assessment practices, in selected courses, by academics delivering similar programs. The activity can be singular or reciprocal.

## 4. External referencing

4.1 External referencing involves comparing our operations and practices against those of other higher education providers or against external reference points.

4.2 External reference points may include, but are not limited to:

- the Australian Qualifications Framework
- the University's strategic plan
- the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)
- Codes of Practice
- Discipline learning outcome standards
- External professional accreditation standards and requirements
- Employer feedback and input from External Program Advisory Committees
- The requirements for postgraduate study in the discipline or profession concerned
- Learning outcomes for equivalent programs and courses at other institutions

4.3 The intention of external referencing is to evidence the quality of the University's programs and courses and to inform improvements.

4.4 There are a variety of methods for external referencing, including benchmarking, peer review of assessment and moderation.

## 5. External referencing and the program review cycle

5.1 The University's quality assurance processes for all programs are centred around the program review cycle, with all programs undergoing external review every 5 or 7 years.

### APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Academic Board

### RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

### DESIGNATED OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

### FIRST APPROVED

18 June 2019

### LAST AMENDED

27 June 2019

### EFFECTIVE START DATE

27 June 2019

### REVIEW DATE

18 June 2024

### STATUS

Active

### RELATED DOCUMENTS

Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs - Academic Policy

External Referencing: Benchmarking - Procedures

External Referencing: Peer Review of Assessment - Procedures

Information Management Framework - Governing Policy

### RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015

5.2 The program review cycle for all coursework programs will include a schedule of external referencing activities, including both peer review of assessment and benchmarking.

5.3 Peer review of assessment must be undertaken at a minimum for at least three courses in a 5-year program review cycle or at least five courses in a 7-year program review cycle.

5.4 Benchmarking of data for progression, attrition and completion rates must be undertaken at least once per review cycle for those programs in a 5-year review cycle, and twice per review cycle for those programs in a 7-year review cycle. These can be done either against national field of education data for the discipline, or against equivalent program(s) at another provider(s).

5.5 To further quality improvement, staff involved in academic activities are encouraged to undertake additional peer review of assessment and benchmarking activities and can refer to the Peer Review of Assessment Procedures and the Benchmarking Procedures for information on approach and methodology.

## 6. Reporting

Academic Board will receive annual reports on the themes identified through external referencing activities from the Centre for the Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching (C-SALT) and the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International and Quality).

## 7. Records management

7.1 Schools are responsible for creating detailed records of all external referencing undertaken, including the methods used, comparators employed, conclusions drawn, and the outcomes or improvements made.

7.2 Schools are responsible for ensuring all records are captured on the relevant program file in an approved records management system, in accordance with the University's Information Management Framework – Governing Policy.

END