

EXTERNAL REFERENCING POLICY

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Policy Category	Academic		
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Responsible Officer	Head of School		
Related Documents	External Referencing Procedure AIHE Strategic Plan AIHE Risk Register AIHE Quality Assurance Framework Academic Progress, Enrolment and Graduations Policy (and related Academic Progress Procedure) Assessment Policy (and related Procedure) Course Development, Approval, Review and Withdrawal Policy (and related Procedure) Course Approval Document (CAD) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (TEQSA Act 2011) TEQSA Guidance Note: External Referencing (including Benchmarking)		

** Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the review date.*

Document Control

Version #	Date	Key changes
1.0	23/02/2018	Approved by Council

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The External Referencing Policy establishes the requirements for external referencing and benchmarking at Adelaide Institute of Higher Education (AIHE) to evidence quality assurance and quality enhancement in relation to academic programs, business operations and governance.

1.2 The purpose of this Policy is to:

- establish the expectations and standards to be met when undertaking external referencing and benchmarking at AIHE;
- ensure that external referencing activities at AIHE are approached in a coordinated, considered and systematic way;
- ensure that higher education operations at AIHE are comparable to other Australian higher education providers and AIHE's operations meet and where possible, exceed national and international standards and expectations; and
- encourage continuous improvement practice across AIHE's business, governance and academic activities.

2. REGULATORY CONTEXT

2.1 In the context of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* (HES Framework), external referencing means a process through which a higher education provider compares an aspect of its operations with an external comparator(s) for example comparing the design of a course of study and/or student achievement of learning outcomes with that of a comparable course from another provider.

2.2 The purposes of external referencing typically include:

- providing evidence of the quality and standing of a provider's operations;
- offering an external evidence base as context for the development of internal improvements, especially to student outcomes; and
- establishing or fostering collaborative improvement efforts across providers.

3. SCOPE

3.1 The External Referencing Policy applies to staff and governing bodies of AIHE in relation to the quality assurance and quality enhancement of AIHE's academic programs, student outcomes, business operations and governance.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 AIHE is committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality of its operations and academic outcomes to provide active, engaging, inquiry-based business education for its students.

4.2 AIHE will implement external referencing in alignment with AIHE's Policy Framework and Quality Assurance Framework at a scale appropriate to the organisation.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 AIHE will identify and monitor standards and performance in order to improve AIHE outcomes, processes and practices.

5.2 External referencing will be integrated into the operations of AIHE, with routine analysis of data collected and use of the outcomes to drive improvements. AIHE will use a number of approaches and techniques, such as benchmarking, peer review and moderation, and will use

both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Appropriate indicators will be selected, and these will be well defined, measurable, and refined to suit the AIHE context as necessary.

5.3 AIHE's external referencing may include benchmarking activities such as:

- organisational benchmarking – comparisons at the organisational level, for example staff ratios, criteria for academic appointments, financial information, student support services, etc.;
- course and subject benchmarking, including review of course and subject design, learning outcomes, assessment construction, course admission criteria and student performance;
- process benchmarking, which involves comparison of particular AIHE practices and processes and their efficiency;
- outcomes benchmarking relating to the comparison of outcomes data, especially student outcomes – for example attrition, retention and completion rates; and
- best-practice benchmarking in which AIHE selects comparator/s thought to be at the forefront in the area to be benchmarked – for example the benchmarking of policies, procedures and agency performance to determine their efficiency and cost effectiveness.

5.4 In accord with TEQSA guidance, AIHE recognises that the purpose of benchmarking is not to standardise all courses and all assessment outcomes, but to reveal variations, and establish whether those variations arise from the individual nature of the courses or the student cohorts, or from variations in quality or academic standards.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 AIHE Council is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this Policy.

6.2 Academic Board is responsible for:

- monitoring and reporting on external referencing activities in relation to academic matters;
- considering and approving proposals for external referencing in relation to academic matters, including proposals to partner with other organisations; and
- overseeing the implementation of improvements arising from external referencing report recommendations.

6.3 The Head of School is responsible for:

- developing and implementing external referencing activities in relation to academic programs;
- establishing Memorandums of Understanding with benchmarking partners;
- reporting progress and outcomes of such external referencing activities to the Teaching and Learning Committee, Academic Board and Council as required; and
- working with staff to monitor the implementation of improvements arising from external referencing report recommendations.

6.4 The Course Coordinator will:

- prepare proposals and reports for external referencing as required;
- lead and manage external moderation and benchmarking activities as required;
- report to the Head of School on the progress of relevant external referencing activities;
- cultivate an appreciation amongst staff and students of external referencing activities.

6.5 The General Manager is responsible for:

- developing and implementing external referencing activities in relation to business operations and governance controls;
- liaising with external benchmarking partners regarding the parameters of benchmarking;
- reporting progress and outcomes of such external referencing activities to Council, Academic Board and other governing bodies as required;
- ensuring that outcomes of external referencing activities are appropriately recorded and reported to enable informed decision-making and support effective implementation of improvements; and
- working with staff to monitor the implementation of improvements arising from external referencing report recommendations.

6.6 As required, AIHE staff will:

- participate in external referencing activities;
- provide qualitative and quantitative data for external referencing activities; and
- prepare external moderation and benchmarking reports.

7. DEFINITIONS

7.1 See the AIHE Glossary of Terms for definitions.