BENCHMARKING POLICY

2018

Contents

FOREWORD 2

APPROVAL AND COMMENCEMENT 3

UNIVERSITY VISION AND MISSION 4

Vision 4

Mission 4

CORE VALUES OF THE UNIVERSITY 4

QUALITY STATEMENT 5

1.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY 6

2.0 Policy Objectives 6

3.0 PRINCIPLES 6

4.0 code of conduct 7

5.0 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES 7

6.0 PROCEDURE 8

6.1 Project Initiation 8

6.2 Project Management 9

6.3 Integration with Quality Assurance Systems 9

7.0 TYPES OF BENCHMARKING 10

BENCHMARKING RESOURCES 11

4.0 PRIORITY AREAS FOR BENCHMARKING 11

6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATING FINDINGS 12

7.0 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS 12

8.0 APPENDIX 13

Appendix I 13

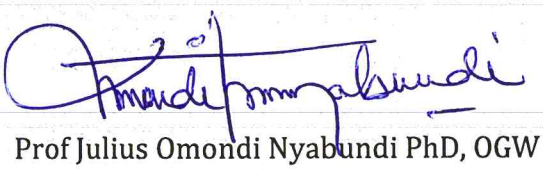
Benchmarking Checklist 13

FOREWORD

Benchmarking is a means of comparing the University's performance or standards, or both, with those of its peers. It is a means by which the University can monitor its relative performance, identify gaps, seek fresh approaches to bring about improvements, set goals, establish priorities for change and resource allocation, and follow through with change processes based on empirical evidence. It can be about broad University-wide issues or specific matters affecting only one area; it can be strategic (addressing priority issues) or cyclical (addressing a number of areas on a regular basis) or ad hoc (taking advantage of an opportunity). Benchmarking projects can be as simple as doing a desktop survey of relevant websites or may involve a formal request for information and/or an agreement with another institution.

Whatever its scope or subject matter, benchmarking is an important element of the University's quality assurance cycle.

Essentially, this benchmarking policy tells us how the standards we have set for ourselves compare to our peers; how our performance measure against the outcomes of national and comparable institutions and how we adapt good practice examples from other institutions to our own institution



Prof Julius Omondi Nyabundi PhD, OGW

VICE-CHANCELLOR

APPROVAL AND COMMENCEMENT

This policy shall be known as Maseno University Bench Marking Policy herein after also referred to as Policy No MSU/ACA/015 and shall take effect on approval by Council.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 23(1) and section 35(1)(a)(iii) of the Universities Act, Section 19(2)(q) of the Charter for Maseno University 2013 and Schedule I (1.2)(q) of the Maseno University Statutes, Maseno University Council certifies that this policy has been made in accordance with all relevant legislations.

Dated the ....12th....day of ....October....2018

Signed Abdullah Said Date 12/10/2018

Prof. Abdullah Naji Said
CHAIRMAN, MASENO UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

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UNIVERSITY VISION AND MISSION

Vision

The University of Excellence in Discovery and Dissemination of Knowledge

Mission

To discover, harness, apply, disseminate and preserve knowledge for good of humanity

CORE VALUES OF THE UNIVERSITY

- **Relevance**

  The University is committed to ensuring relevance in its programs and activities

- **Excellence**

  Excellence shall be targeted in outputs of the university

- **Equity**

  The University shall ensure that there is equity in all the opportunities within its jurisdiction

- **Quality**

  All outputs and processes of the University shall ensure that quality is maintained

- **Integrity**

  The University shall ensure integrity in all their undertaking

QUALITY STATEMENT

Maseno University is committed to quality through teaching, research and development, providing timely services to foster and develop academic excellence in basic and applied research at all levels of study by training practice oriented manpower, who can contribute effectively to social, intellectual and academic development.

The University is internally engaged with its employees, to continually improve its services, products, processes, methods, and work environment to ensure each customer is receiving the highest quality service or product at the committed cost and on time. It is committed to quality through teaching, research and development; providing on time services to foster and develop academic excellence in basic and applied research at all levels of study by training practice oriented manpower, who can contribute effectively to social, intellectual and academic development in the community, nation and community of nations. To realize this commitment, the University encourages benchmarking exercises to sharpen staff skills and continuously improve service delivery. This way, the University ensures each customer is receiving highest quality service or product.

Additionally, the University Management through the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Performance Management monitors and reviews impact of benchmarking exercises for both staff and students who have been involved in benchmarking at one time or the other.

1.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

Benchmarking shall be done in identified priority areas in all spheres of the University.

It shall;

i. support the University's mission, values and strategic priorities
ii. be characterized by a commitment to: learning from best practice; the implementation of potential improvements arising from the findings of benchmarking projects; and the sharing of good practices once projects are completed
iii. be balanced in terms of the value received compared to costs involved in undertaking the projects have the approval of the relevant unit head

2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives on benchmarking are to:

i. identify and monitor standards and performance in order to improve University outcomes, processes and practices
ii. discover new ideas for achieving the University's 'core objectives' as outlined in its Strategic Plan
iii. provide an evidence-based framework for change and improvement.
iv. inform planning and goal setting
v. improve decision-making through referencing comparative data
vi. bring an external focus to internal activities

3.0 PRINCIPLES

The University is committed to reviewing developing and coordinating quality standards and continuous improvement initiatives across the University.

Maseno University encourages benchmarking or external referencing with comparable institutions as a means of identifying comparative strengths and weaknesses, improving performance and assuring quality and standards

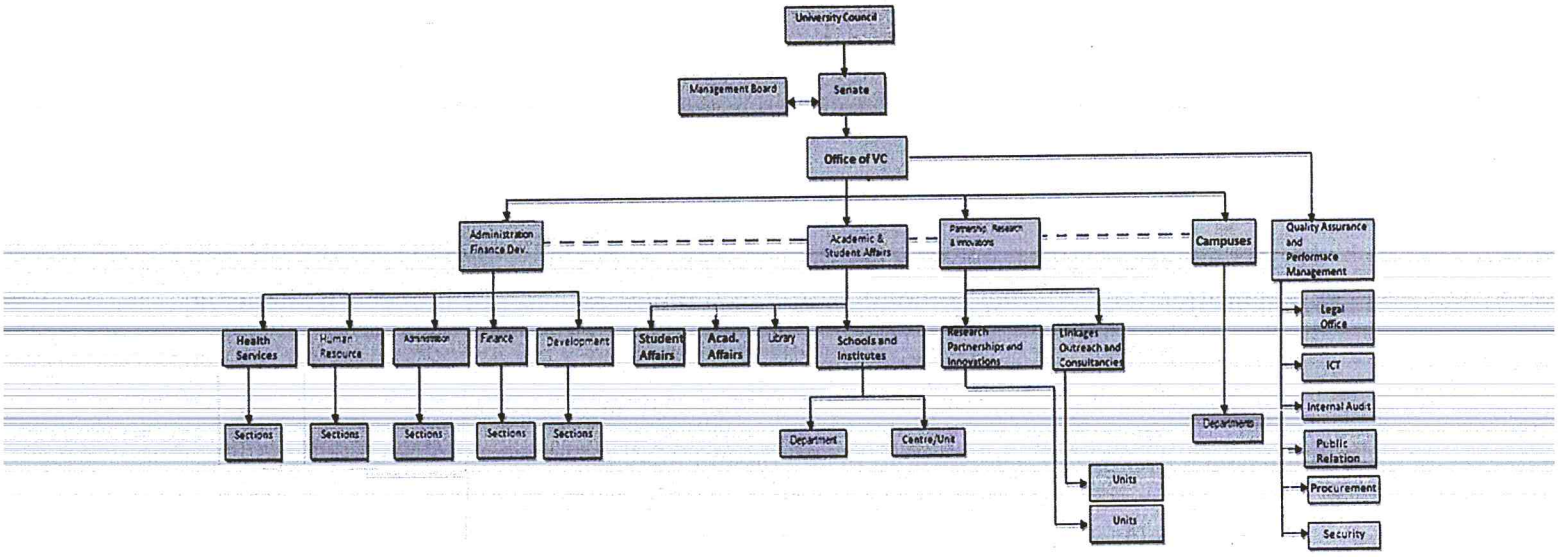
4.0 CODE OF CONDUCT

The following should be taken into account when undertaking benchmarking projects where a request for information is involved:

i. **Confidentiality:** All benchmarking exchanges should be treated as confidential. Publication and external communication of findings should not proceed without the permission of all partners involved in the project.
ii. **Use:** Benchmarking information should not be used for other than the express purpose for which it was obtained without prior consent of all participating partners.
iii. **Exchange:** The type or level of information exchanged should be comparable between the benchmarking partners.
iv. **Agreement:** If a benchmarking agreement is entered into, issues about confidentiality, use and the type and level of information to be exchanged should be included in the agreement.

5.0 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Management responsibilities should be assigned in accordance with the normal University organization structure and reporting systems, and routine management practices must apply to any significant project undertaken.



6.0 PROCEDURE

6.1 Project Initiation

i. The Benchmarking Reports Repository (staff only access) must be checked prior to commencing a project to ascertain whether similar projects have or are already being undertaken.

ii. Benchmarking projects involving a formal request for information from another institution must be approved by the relevant unit head. This can be a Head of Department, Dean of Faculty/Director of an Institute/ Center, Principal of a college, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or, in the case of any large-scale University-wide benchmarking, may be the Vice-Chancellor.

iii. If the scope of the project affects more than one area, then consultation and agreement between the areas impacted are essential prior to the project's commencement.

iv. Special care must be undertaken when projects require that the University's corporate data be shared with other institutions: in this case the relevant data custodian must be contacted and it will be his/her responsibility to ensure that appropriate approvals for the data transfer are obtained from senior management.

6.2 Project Management

i. The responsibility for running the project will be with the unit head under whose authority the project was approved or his/her delegate.

ii. Contact with partner organizations will normally be through the unit head taking responsibility for the project, unless delegated by him or her. When institutional support is needed for a project to proceed with particular partners, then the responsible unit head must seek necessary approvals from the relevant Dean/Director, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and ultimately the Vice-Chancellor.

iii. Written agreements with other institutions and organizations with which projects are undertaken must be entered into in line with the Contract Management Framework that has been negotiated and agreed upon and signed in accordance with the formal delegations of the University.

iv. The University expects that benchmarking projects will be funded by the area that initiates, manages and accepts responsibility for the project. If central funds are required such as might be the case for large projects, then a submission must be made through the planning and budgeting process.

v. Where confidentiality provisions agreed upon allow, benchmarking project reports should be lodged with the Benchmarking Reports Repository (staff only access).

vi. Each year, a summary report on the benchmarking projects undertaken by Faculties, schools and centers must be submitted to the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor as part of the Unit Performance Report.

6.3 Integration with Quality Assurance Systems

Benchmarking projects are most successful when they are integrated with other initiatives and processes designed to improve outcomes within the University. To this end, the University expects that projects, findings and implementation plans will be embedded into Divisional and Faculty/schools operational and Internal Quality Assurance plans and audits.

6.4 Benchmarking Guidelines

Although the University does not prescribe any particular approach to benchmarking, Divisions Faculties, Units must be aware of the management arrangements that apply as described above in **Managing Benchmarking.**

7.0 TYPES OF BENCHMARKING

The University has the option to employ a number of different types of benchmarking to support its goal of continuous improvement as follows:

i. **Strategic Bench marking**

Used to improve overall performance by examining the long-term strategies and general approaches of institutions that have succeeded in areas of strategic priority for the University.

ii. **Performance Bench marking**

Used to compare and monitor the performance of the University with its peers using a range of metrics including financial, research, and learning and teaching performance indicators.

iii. **Functional Bench marking**

Used to compare and improve functional areas in the organization such as Human Resources or Finance.

iv. **Process Bench marking**

Used when the focus is on improving specific critical processes and operations. Benchmarking partners are sought from best practice organizations that perform similar work or deliver similar service.

v. **Internal Bench marking**

Involves comparing practices and processes with other units in the University. The advantage of internal benchmarking is that access to sensitive data and

information is easier; standardized data is often readily available; and usually less time and resources are needed. There may be relatively few barriers to implementation as practices may be relatively easy to transfer across the same organization.

vi. **International Bench marking**

Involves strategic, performance, functional and process benchmarking with comparator institutions overseas. International benchmarking widens the University's focus and helps to ensure international competitiveness.

vii. **Quantitative Bench marking**

Looks at quantifiable outputs of an operation. The benchmarks are hard measures. Measurement is critical to help the University monitor its current performance relative to that of best practice institutions.

viii. **Qualitative Bench marking**

Looks at the systems and processes that deliver the results. The qualitative benchmarks are generally attributes of best practices in a functional area and these benchmarks could be simply a checklist of essential attributes constituting best practice.

BENCHMARKING RESOURCES

The University shall provide a budget for bench marking within the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Performance Management.

4.0 PRIORITY AREAS FOR BENCHMARKING

The University shall set priority areas for benchmarking

5.0 MANAGING BENCHMARKING

The University encourages benchmarking with comparator institutions within Kenya, the East African sub-region and globally as a method of improving performance and assuring standards. While there is no prescribed methodology for

conducting benchmarking exercises, the University expects staff to comply with the following benchmarking principles and code of conduct as prescribed in the scope.

6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATING FINDINGS

The value of benchmarking is considerably enhanced if the findings are shared with similar or related units within the University. Benchmarking reports will be included in the **Benchmarking Reports Repository (staff only access)** for the benefit of other sections of the University. This includes externally produced consortia reports. Benchmarking reports will vary depending on the size and complexity of the exercise. They may include:

i. a gap analysis
ii. a discussion of best practice examples
iii. recommendations for the adaptation of initiatives to Maseno University context
iv. a cost/benefit analysis.

Progress towards implementing improvements based on benchmarking projects, and their effect on outcomes, shall be shared. Implementation plans should be prepared to operationalize recommendations arising from benchmarking reports. Progress against these plans should be regularly monitored. Benchmarking reports should be lodged with the Quality Assurance.

7.0 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

The Bench marking should be read alongside the under mentioned:

i. Universities Standards and Guidelines (2014)
ii. Teaching and Learning Policy (2018)
iii. Human Resource Policy and Procedure Manual
iv. Global and Local Level Sustainable Education for Development Policy
v. Mentorship Policy

8.0 APPENDIX

Appendix I

Benchmarking Checklist

The Checklist covers the key activities of benchmarking:

Key Activities	Tasks Completed (✓)
Project Selection (Identify what is to be benchmarked)	
Form an Internal Benchmarking Team	
Select the Benchmarking Partners (Consider the necessary protocols required such as confidentiality arrangement, agreements, code of practice, etc.)	
Finalize Benchmarks (Measures & indicators)	
Collect Data	
Analyze Data (Determine performance gaps, reasons for gaps, cost/adaptation benefit analysis)	
Communicate Findings (Gain acceptance from management and area staff)	
Set Functional Targets (Implement specific improvement actions)	
Prepare Monitor Progress Plan (Include responsibilities and deadlines)	