



# Supporting quality improvement of exercise physiology practicum through benchmarking

Jacqueline Raymond, Kellie Toohey<sup>2</sup>, Angela Douglas<sup>2</sup>, Christian Pitcher<sup>3</sup>, Amanda Semaan<sup>1</sup>, Sue McAllister<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The University of Sydney, <sup>2</sup>Univeristy of Canberra, <sup>3</sup>Australian Catholic University

## Introduction

Benchmarking between universities supports a continuous cycle of quality improvement (Garlick & Pryor, 2004) and is now an expectation of standard practice under the new course accreditation requirements set by Exercise and Sports Science Australia.

Here within, we describe a benchmarking protocol which has been designed with reference to ACODE (2014) and Booth et al (2011) and takes into account key principles for success as summarised by Oliver (2010).

## The Benchmarking Partnership

In 2017, academic staff involved with the clinical education programs for accredited exercise physiology degrees at the University of Sydney and the University of Canberra agreed to benchmark practicum programs. The partnership will be guided by a Code of Conduct and will have a signed Memorandum of Understanding in place which includes items such as:

- Access to and storage of data
- How information is to be shared and used
- Obligations around confidentiality
- Intellectual property rules

## The Scope of the Benchmarking Exercise

The scope will relate to the academic quality of the practicum program of clinical exercise physiology degrees. The benchmarking exercise will cover: Assessment, Preparing students to succeed during placement, Support for practicum supervisors.

## How it works



1. Agree on the benchmarks to be included

2. The benchmark has a good practice statement.

3. The good practice statement is described by several performance indicators.

4. Each performance indicator is measured on a scale of 1-5. A university self-assesses against the performance indicator, allocating a score from 1-5 and stating the rationale and evidence for that score.

5. The two universities meet to share information, discuss best practice, learn from each other.

6. Reflection, plan of action.

## For example:

Benchmark 1. Assessment

*Good practice statement:* Assessment processes and practices are fair, transparent, authentic and credible, are aligned with learning outcomes, are sensitive to the continuum of student development and are designed to advance student learning.

1. The requirements for assessment tasks and how they should be completed are clearly communicated
  2. Assessment expectations about the way in which student performances are judged and how these judgments are used to determine a grade are clearly communicated
- Etc....

### PI 1: The requirements for assessment tasks and how they should be completed are clearly communicated

- 1 = Assessment information is not communicated
- 2 = Assessment information is poorly communicated
- 3 = Assessment information is communicated, but is not clear and may not be communicated to all stakeholders
- 4 = Assessment information is clearly communicated, but not to all stakeholders
- 5 = Assessment information is clearly communicated to all stakeholders

Rationale and evidence:

## References

Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-Learning (ACODE). (2014). *ACODE Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning, v3.1*. Available at: <http://www.acode.edu.au/>

Booth S, Melano A, et al. (2011). Articulating and comparing standards through benchmarking of assessment. *Proceedings of AUQF, 2011*, 38-47.

Garlick S & Pryor G (2004). *Benchmarking the university: Learning about improvement*. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). (C. o. Australia)

Oliver B (2010). *Benchmarking partnerships for graduate employability*. ALTC Final Report.