



MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY

BENCHMARKING POLICY

SEPTEMBER, 2023

APPROVAL

Policy Title: Benchmarking Policy
Policy Contact: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration, Planning and Finance)
Approval Authority: The University Council
Category: Division of Administration, Planning, and Finance)
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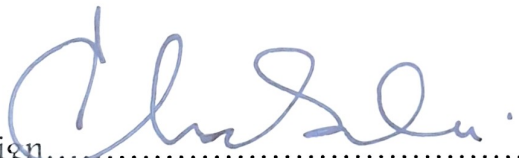
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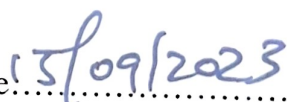
Sign.....

Date.....

Joyce J. Agalo, Ph.D.

Vice – Chancellor

Sign.....


Date.....


Dr. Christopher G. Gakahu, Ph.D.

Chairman of Council



FOREWORD

Machakos University Management appreciates that benchmarking helps the University establish the true picture of her performance. This is achieved by analyzing our business against competitors in the same industry, thereby gaining a clear insight into the institution's performance. More importantly, it enables the identification of strengths and weaknesses. In the absence of such insight, University managers can be caught out traveling blind and making decisions without the right information.

Benchmarking will assure the University an objective View thus, giving the true business performance. An aspect that most business owners ignore since, over time they become too close and emotionally invested in the business, making it difficult to stand back and be unbiased. Therefore, this Benchmarking Policy will offer a reflection of where the University is against competitors, enabling her to establish the right position in the market. This will lead to making realistic assessments of the Universities' performance and implementation plans for the future. The University strongly believes in the importance of human capital, without whose performance the University is not. This Benchmarking Policy, therefore, shall drive employee productivity by empowering the management to understand employees in detail, and subsequently, set reasonable expectations for staff productivity.

Joyce J. Agalo, PhD

Vice – Chancellor

UNIVERSITY FUNDAMENTAL STATEMENTS

VISION

Excellence in transformative scholarship and community service

MISSION

To provide scholarship through teaching, training, research and innovation; and community service for sustainable industrial and socioeconomic transformation

Machakos University Identity Statement

Machakos University is an Academic Institution Committed to Generating and Transmitting Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes through Science, Technology, Research, and Innovation for the Benefit of Humanity.

Machakos University Philosophy Statement

The Philosophy of Machakos University is ‘Education for Industrial and Economic Transformation’

Mandate

The mandate of Machakos University is to Teach, Train, Conduct research, Innovate, Collaborate, generate new knowledge and Community Service

Core Values

Creativity:	We shall use imagination and original ideas to create value for our customers.
Agility:	We shall embrace urgency and flexibility in responding to customer demands
Meritocracy:	We shall promote merit-based services
Professionalism:	We are committed to high standards of training, research and service delivery
Integrity:	We shall uphold honesty and high moral standards
Inclusivity:	We shall offer equitable access to opportunities and resources

ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

ASA:	Academic and Student Affairs
APF:	Administration, Planning, and Finance
CoD:	Chairman of Department
CUE:	Commission for University Education
DVC:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
MksU:	Machakos University
MOU:	Memorandum of Understanding
RIL:	Research, Innovation and Linkages
VC:	Vice-Chancellor

DEFINITIONS

Academic Quality Assurance:	A framework that provides principles and processes aimed at ensuring academic quality.
Benchmarking:	The process of comparing practices/processes or performance outcomes between the University and other higher institutions of learning. It enables valid and relevant comparisons and provides an external reference point for the achievement of required standards.
Best Practice Benchmarking:	Selecting comparators or comparators thought to be at the forefront in the area to be benchmarked.
External Benchmark:	A point of reference from another similar institution or program with which performance is being compared.
Internal Benchmark:	A point of reference within the University.
Target Benchmark:	Anticipated performance level or desired outcome.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

Benchmarking is a means of comparing the University's performance or standards, or both, with those of its peers. It enables the University to monitor her relative performance, identify gaps, seek fresh approaches to bring about improvements, establish priorities for change and resource allocation, and follow through with change processes based on empirical evidence. Benchmarking can involve broad University-wide issues or specific matters affecting only one area; it can be strategic (addressing priority issues) cyclical (addressing several areas regularly) 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.

This Policy provides a framework for the development of benchmarking strategies. It provides guidelines on the types, processes, administration, and implementation of benchmarking by the University. To ensure the benchmarked data /information is utilized in the right manner, there will be adherence to data protection law and the prescribed procedure for handling privileged information.

1.3 Rationale of the Policy

Benchmarking is a strategy tool used to compare the performance of business processes and products with the best performances of other businesses inside and outside an industry. It is the search for industry best practices that lead to superior performance.

Machakos University Management recognizes that she operates in a very dynamic environment and that there is a revolution in almost every aspect of life. The University, therefore, cannot close herself to her world and expect survival. To



attain competitive and distinctive advantage the Institution needs to be kept updated on areas that must be improved on, to be at par with the growth and success of other institutions of learning. By assessing what other universities are doing successfully, the Management will develop a plan to boost performance and take advantage of opportunities.

This Policy shall, therefore, enable the University to reap the benefits of benchmarking and be compliant with the Commission for University Education which prescribes institutions of higher learning to have such a policy.

1.4 Purpose of the Policy

The main purpose of this Policy is to enable the University to continually improve her position as a provider of higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Community Service, by undertaking various internal and external benchmarking activities.

1.5 Objectives of the Policy

1.5.1 Specific Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- a) Identify and monitor standards and performance to improve University outcomes, processes, and practices.
- b) Provide an evidence-based framework for change and improvement.
- c) Establish consistency in the implementation of benchmarking practices.
- d) Improve decision-making through referencing comparative data.
- e) Bring an external focus to internal activities.
- f) Create uniformity of procedure and activities of benchmarking.

1.6 Scope of the Policy

The Policy shall apply to all employees, students, and stakeholders of the University involved in benchmarking projects undertaken by Divisions, Schools, Departments, and other units of the University.

The University shall encourage benchmarking with comparator institutions within Kenya, the East African sub-region, and globally as a method of improving performance and assuring standards.

1.7 Benchmarking Guiding Principles

The principles that underpin this Policy include:

- a) Scholarship and Research shall comprise the foundation of benchmarking activities.
- b) Identification of the University's comparable strengths and weaknesses shall be the core of Benchmarking to improve the quality of processes and practices.
- c) Emphasis on collective responsibility in the achievement of University targets.
- d) Clear and accurate documentation of all benchmarking activities for posterity.
- e) Prompt implementation of benchmarking activities and communication of results.
- f) Emphasis on professionalism in benchmarking exercise, activities, and schedules.
- g) Emphasis on subject matter expert leading benchmarking activities.

pholding integrity, transparency and full disclosure to all the internal and external stakeholders involved.

1.7.8 Specificity:

The process, procedure or activity to be benchmarked shall be specified clearly and metrics determined to minimize ambiguity.

1.7.9 Consistency:

The whole process of benchmarking and implementation of the results will be done in compliance with the principles and regulations at all times.

1.7 Legislative and Regulatory Framework

The following legal and regulatory documents shall inform the Policy:

- a) The Constitution of Kenya 2010.
- b) Universities Act 2012.
- c) Commission for University Education Standards and Guidelines 2014.
- d) Data Protection Act 2019.
- e) Machakos University Charter 2016.
- f) Machakos University Statutes 2019.

2.0 ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY

2.1 Interpretation

The Vice-Chancellor and the respective Deputy Vice-Chancellors shall be responsible for the interpretation and full implementation of this Policy.

Effective implementation of this Policy shall be the responsibility of the vice-vice-chancellor and respective Deputy Vice-Chancellors. The procedure and activities shall be initiated at the basic operating unit and escalated through the statutory organs of the University. In the event it is initiated by management, the process shall be systematically cascaded to the basic operational level.

2.2 Responsibility for Benchmarking

The responsibility concerning benchmarking activities shall differ depending on the nature of the benchmarking to be undertaken and will include:

In academic-related matters, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Academic and Student Affairs (ASA), a Dean, or a Chairman of the Department (CoD) shall initiate any required benchmarking activities, including their timing and approval. On non-academic matters; Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor–Administration, Planning, and Finance (APF), and Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Research, Innovation and Linkages (RIL) or other Heads of Departments in their functional areas, shall initiate benchmarking activities as required from time to time.

2.3 Benchmarking Approaches

The University shall have the option to employ different types of benchmarking with reference to prevailing government guidelines and circulars to support her goal of continuous improvement. For any of the benchmarking approaches to be applied, approval shall be sought from the Vice -Chancellor .The approaches include the following:

a) Strategic Benchmarking

This strategy shall be 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.

b) Performance Benchmarking

This approach shall be applied to compare and monitor the performance of the University with its peers using a range of metrics including financial, research, learning, and teaching performance indicators

c) Functional Benchmarking

This type shall be conducted to compare and improve functional areas in the University such as Human Resources or Finance.

d) Process Benchmarking

Process benchmarking shall be applied when the focus is on improving specific critical processes and operations. Benchmarking partners are sought from best-practice Universities that perform similar work or deliver similar services.

e) Internal Benchmarking

This shall be referred to when 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 establishment.

f) International Benchmarking

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

g) Best Practice Benchmarking

The benchmarking will be done against Universities that are at the forefront in the area to be benchmarked.

3.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

3.1 Management of Benchmarking Information

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

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

3.2 Benchmarking Phases

The University shall employ the following benchmarking phases on need basis:

Phase 1: Pre-Benchmarking – Each Division and functional area shall identify local and international institutions that have similar data and best practices.

Phase 2: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) –The research, Innovation, and Linkages Division Shall negotiate and sign benchmarking MOU where applicable. The MOU shall address all points of cooperation.

Phase 3: Executing the Benchmarking Plan: Based on the signed agreement, the concerned functional areas shall execute the benchmarking plan. A detailed report should be prepared and submitted to the Divisional and functional heads.

Implementation: The Divisional or functional heads after having benchmarked shall be required to prepare a detailed report with recommendations of the best practices to be adopted and the reasons thereof. The report shall be presented to the University Management Board for adoption and subsequent submission to the Council for approval for implementation.

Communication of Findings: The value of benchmarking is considerably enhanced if the findings are shared with similar or related units within the University. The University shall encourage the production of benchmarking reports.

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

3.3 Benchmarking Procedure

- a) Identify the process or practice to be benchmarked and why.
- b) Determine how this is aligned with the University's strategic goals and objectives.
- c) Identify “best in class” organizations to benchmark with.
- d) Appoint the benchmarking team with clear Terms of Reference approved by Management.
- e) Define the data collection method or approach.
- f) Determine the resource requirements, timing, and schedule.
- g) Collect appropriate objective data from the best practice organization.
- h) Determine current performance levels and identify gaps between the process or practice and the benchmarking comparator including:

- i) Identifying areas of good practice
- j) Identifying areas for improvement
- k) Identifying areas for sharing and collaboration.
- l) Identifying issues for clarification and liaising as necessary with benchmark partners.
- m) Identifying any additional data requirements or contextual information needed.
- n) Develop an action/implementation plan with clear responsibilities and time frames.
- o) Determine future performance improvements.
- p) Develop appropriate strategy and improvement action plan.
- q) Implement specific actions and monitor the process.
- r) Recalibrate that is re-evaluate and update benchmarks based on the most recent performance data.

3.4 Focus of Benchmarking

The University will use any one or multiple types of benchmarking and may undertake benchmarking to compare its performance concerning several academic and non-academic matters including, but not limited to the following:

- a) Teaching and cohort reporting;
- b) Program and credit arrangements;
- c) Student learning outcomes, assessment monitoring, attrition and retention rates, progression, and completion;

- d) Graduate attributes and outcomes, graduate satisfaction outcomes, graduate destinations, and graduate employment;
- e) Resources and research with other higher education providers;
- f) Progression to further study and selection processes
- g) Research practices.
- h) Quality Assurance practices.
- i) Research, Innovation and Linkages
- j) Administration, Planning, and Finance functions
- k) Employee performance and motivation
- l) General strategy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

3.5 Selecting Benchmarking Partners

Selecting appropriate benchmarking partners is essential for successful strategic and performance benchmarking. The University shall undertake this type of benchmarking with other universities. A benchmarking partner should:

- a) Have a compatible mission, values, and objectives
- b) Be of comparable size
- c) Be a research-intensive university
- d) Have a similar discipline mix
- e) Have superior performance in the areas to be benchmarked
- f) Commit to quality management and 'willingness to share'.

In addition to the above, international benchmarking partners should have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University or other agreement, preferably including a reference to benchmarking.

While undertaking functional and process benchmarking the University shall choose partners with best practice in the areas or processes to be compared.

Membership in benchmarking consortia is another avenue for comparing performance and outcomes with other institutions.

4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.1 This Policy shall be monitored regularly and evaluated periodically for continued effectiveness and relevance.

4.2 Each unit shall develop measurable indicators to monitor the implementation process of the benchmark.

5.0 POLICY REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years or as need arises.