



Leading in Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching

**Benchmarks for Technology
Enhanced Learning**

**Report on the refresh project 2014 and
Inter-Institutional Benchmarking Summit**

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Description	Term	Description
ACODE	Australasian Council on Online Distance and E-learning	CSU	Charles Sturt University
CQU	Central Queensland University	LTLI	Learning Technologies Leadership Institute
Massey	Massey University	MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses
OLT	Office for Learning and Teaching	PIs	Performance Indicators
TEL	Technology enhanced learning	USQ	University of Southern Queensland
UNE	University of New England		

Introduction

The ACode E-Learning Benchmarks established in 2004 were last updated in 2007, well before the advent of ubiquitous mobile delivery, the widespread use of social media, cloud-based systems and the more recent phenomenon of MOOCs. In 2013 a project was initiated to update the Benchmarks. This was not a trivial undertaking and it was important to establish a robust process to allow not only for an update but also for a rigorous trial of any changes proposed to the benchmarks.

Subsequently, a group of six ACode representatives, with significant experience in technology enhanced learning, undertook this task. As a consequence of this review the Benchmarks were renamed to the ACode Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning. It also resulted in a major trial of the Benchmarks conducted in Sydney in June 2014, where 24 institutions were involved in an Inter-Institutional Benchmarking Summit.

The summit not only proved the validity of the Benchmarks but notionally ushered in a new opportunity for ACode to be a major player in the Benchmarking space in Australasia. As a further consequence, all the institutions involved in this activity expressed an interest in using the benchmarks in some ongoing way to ensure that their technology enhanced learning practice was undergoing rigorous and ongoing quality assurance.

This Report starts with a brief history of the Benchmarks, then provides a description of the:

- review process the Benchmarks underwent;
- inter-institutional benchmarking summit;
- formal evaluation of the summit; and
- subsequent reflections on the future state of the Benchmarks.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations on how ACode may approach the facilitation of future Benchmarking activities.

Summary of recommendations

1. That over the next few months some minor adjustments be made to the Benchmarks, based on those things identified by the Review Group and from the Evaluation Survey.
2. That the final set of benchmarks be presented and endorsed at the ACode 66 business meeting in Melbourne.
3. That future iterations of the Benchmarks look to establish if there is a stronger case to merge Benchmarks 7 and 8, and by extension Benchmarks 5 and 6 that use a similar methodology.
4. That ACode agree to facilitate a formal benchmarking activity every second year and that there be allowance for this made within business processes, similar for that of the LTLI. In doing so, consideration should be given to whether the activity should stretch over three full days.
5. That a series of online tools and a collaboration space be established within the ACode site to make it easier for institutions to engage in formal inter-institutional benchmarking activities.
6. When the online collaborative space is established, that an area be provided to allow institutions to share good practice examples that align with the performance indicators.

A brief history

The benchmarks were originally developed as part of an ACode-funded project initiated in 2004. They were developed collaboratively by a group of ACode Institutional nominees, from Melbourne University, the University of Tasmania (UTas), Monash University, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University (RMIT), the University of Queensland (UQ), the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) and Victoria University – Melbourne (VU). They were subsequently piloted by these universities and were independently reviewed by Paul Bacsich, an independent benchmarking consultant (Bridgland & Goodacre, 2005).

The purpose of the benchmarks was (and still is) to support continuous quality improvement in e-learning (now reframed as Technology Enhanced Learning). The approach of the Benchmarks reflected an enterprise perspective, integrating the key issue of pedagogy with institutional dimensions such as planning, staff development and infrastructure provision. The benchmarks were developed for use at either an enterprise level, or by an organisational unit, and could be used for self-assessment purposes, or as part of a broader collaborative benchmarking activity.

The Benchmarks were revised in 2007, again by a group of ACode representative led by Christine Goodacre, who subsequently facilitated five interactive workshops in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth to promote the use of the newly revised tool. Since then the Benchmarks have been strategically used by a number of institutions, notably by:

- the Innovative Research Universities of Australia (IRUA) network in 2008, involving; Flinders, Griffith, La Trobe, Macquarie, Murdoch and Newcastle (using Benchmarks 1 and 5)
- two joint activities between USQ and Deakin (all 8 Benchmarks), then USQ and CQU (two benchmarks) in 2008, and
- more recently (2011), six universities (USQ, UNE, CSU, CQU, Massey, and the Sultan Idris Education University Malaysia) came together for a major inter-institutional activity held in Toowoomba.

There are probably other activities of this nature that have occurred but the author is not conversant with them and has found no evidence in support of this. However, a simple Web search did reveal numerous examples of universities and organisations that have used the benchmarks for self-assessment and for various internal quality assurance purposes.

In mid-2013 it was identified by the ACode Executive group that the ACode Benchmarks were in need of refresh (updating). It had then been six years since they had last been updated. During this time significant changes have occurred in higher education institutions, particularly in relation to technology enhanced learning. Notably, the advent of ubiquitous mobile delivery, the wide spread use of social media, cloud-based systems and the more recent phenomenon of MOOCs. With this in mind, it was deemed that a review of the Benchmarks would not be a trivial undertaking and that a robust review process should be established. This was to 1) allow for a complete review and refresh of the benchmarks, and 2) provide for the opportunity to run a rigorous trial of any changes that were proposed to the benchmarks.

Subsequently, a group of six ACode representatives undertook this task, resulting in a reframing of the Benchmarks away from e-Learning to being the ACode Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning. It also resulted in a major trial of the Benchmarks conducted in Sydney in June 2014, where 24 institutions were involved in an Inter-institutional benchmarking activity.

Benchmark refresh

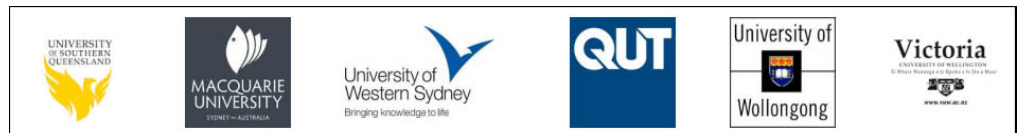
The reframing of the ACode Benchmarks away from e-Learning to focus fairly and squarely on technology enhanced learning (TEL) has been done with a clear understanding that the boundaries around e-Learning have become increasingly blurred, to the point where it is now hard to imagine, in today's higher education

sector, how learning could actually happen without the affordances offered by technology. In shifting the focus of the new Benchmarks to the use of TEL, ACODE have recognised that many of the hallmarks of what were seen in the first major wave of online learning have taken a distinct shift, particularly with the advent of MOOCs and their various derivatives, open source software’s, open educational resources, app-based online interaction and the rise in cloud-based hosting of major institutional systems. Similarly, no longer does an institution rely solely on its learning management system, as many have now developed complex mash-ups of internally and externally hosted environments to feed an increasing business demand for flexibility and constant availability.

As ACODE's membership includes most Australian and all New Zealand universities, as well as the University of the South Pacific, and a representative body of those on the cutting edge of using technology enhanced learning, it was seen that an internal review process would almost certainly meet with success. In addition, by developing this new instrument ACODE is actively looking to support its member institutions by providing them with the opportunity to pro-actively ensure that they have sufficient and adequate measures in place to warrant that their practice in TEL is of the best possible standard.

Those involved

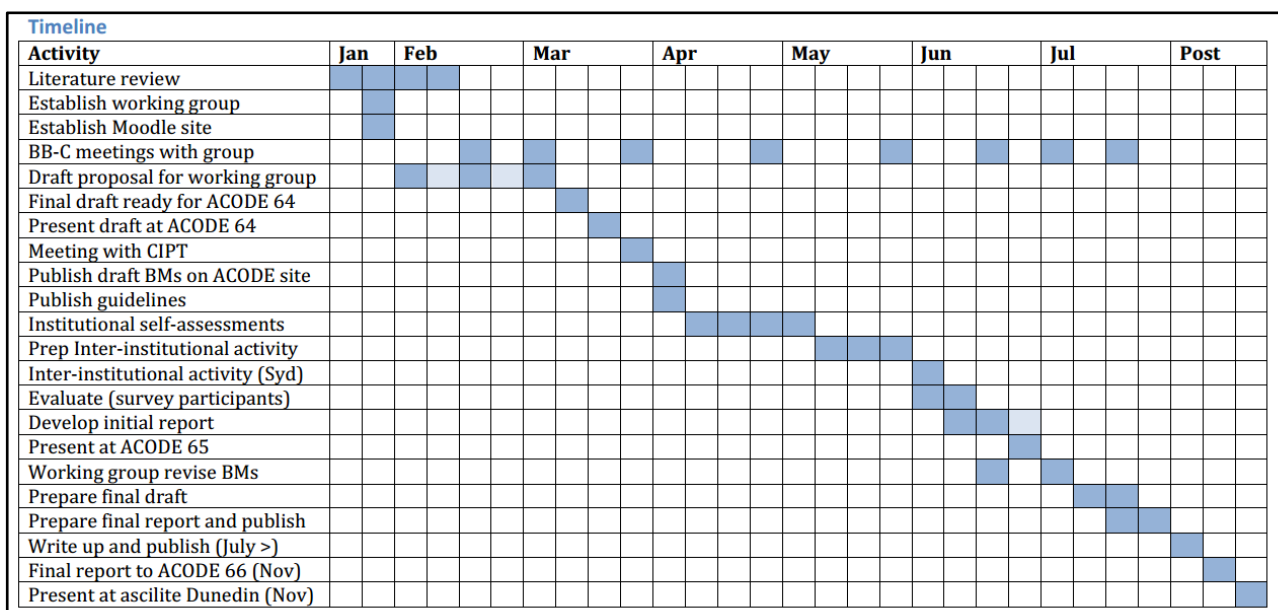
This refresh activity began in January 2014 and was facilitated by Associate Professor



Michael Sankey from the University of Southern Queensland (USQ), who had fortunately been granted Academic Development Leave by the University to undertake this task during Semester 1 2014. Others involved in the refresh activity included; Helen Carter from Macquarie University and President of ACODE, Dr Stephen Marshall from Victoria University in Wellington and Vice-President of ACODE, Associate Professor Romy Lawson from Wollongong University, Dr Carol Russell from the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and Regina Obexer from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). It should be noted, with gratitude, that this was done in addition to these members’ day-jobs.

The process

The following figure provides an overall picture of the projects key timelines and milestones.



In the first instance the author undertook a thorough literature search of current benchmarking and quality assurance tools present in the area of technology enhanced, online and e-Learning. After this review was complete there was a clear sense of where the benchmarks sat within the broader spectrum of tools and methods available. At that point a Moodle Project site was established on the parent ACode site (acode.edu.au) to house the refresh activity. Through this space, resources were posted and Reviewers could participate in discussions, post alternative views and have access to the virtual classroom technology, used for a series of online meetings.

The Author divided the refresh activity into two distinct phases; the first dealt with the first four benchmarks, and then the second four were considered. An analysis document was prepared for each phase, providing the existing benchmark title, supporting statements and performance indicators, a linkage to some of the other tools that existed in these areas, proposed wording changes, new or redundant indicators and a rationale for such changes. This document was circulated to the reviewers via the Project site and each was invited to comment on this document via the use of tracked changes.

Once some initial agreement had been reached, the proposed changes were put into a series of PowerPoint slides ready for sharing through the virtual classroom site, established primarily for the online meetings. These were displayed so that minor editing could be done on the fly, in this online meeting space. Once this second stage of agreement had been reached all the proposed changes were formally documented in a more formalised state and circulated for final comment.

In addition to the new Benchmarks and Performance Indicators (PIs) being developed, a new step-by-step guide was created, along with editable self-assessment template. Further, an additional element was introduced to the process via the creation of an institutional consolidation table. This allowed institutions, who had undertaken an internal activity to consolidate their findings in a formal document that could then be used to extend this out to an inter-institutional activity, without having to repeat certain key steps. These supporting documents had not been provided with the initial benchmarking toolkit.

Once these documents were finalised they were released onto the ACode website in early June 2014 and heavily promoted through various institutional contacts and via a variety of professional networks.

Outcomes

The refresh activity resulted in the development of a revised set of Benchmarks focused more fully on Technology Enhanced Learning, rather than on the more narrowly focused concept of e-Learning. The project also developed a robust methodology for running a self-assessment activity, and developed a comprehensive guide to assist institutions with this. A methodology and supporting documents were also developed to help run an inter-institutional activity, where institutions can formally come together and share their institutional practices within technology enhanced learning.

At the ACode 64 Business Meeting, held at Waikato University in March, an invitation was issued asking ACode representatives if they were interested in undertaking a formal benchmarking activity using the new Benchmarks. A number of institutions indicated their interest and subsequently were invited to participate. As not all the member institutions were present at ACode 64 a further invitation was sent out through the ACode News Forum. News spread quickly from that point and ultimately other institutions, other than ACode members, heard about this opportunity and expressed a desire to be involved.

The Inter-Institutional Benchmarking Summit

In recognition of the importance of this new suite of Benchmarks and the enthusiasm generated as a result of the release of the new Benchmark documents, ACode facilitated a major Benchmarking Summit at Macquarie University in Sydney between 1-3 June. The Summit had four major sponsors, the University of

Southern Queensland, Macquarie University, The Australian Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) and Ako Aotearoa (the New Zealand National Office for Tertiary Teaching Excellence).

With this sponsorship ACODE was able to run this event without having to charge a registration fee and was also able to cover all the venue costs and provide catering for the participants.

This was an unprecedented event within our higher education sector, with 24 institutions from five different countries coming together to Benchmark their capacity in TEL.



Preparations

However, to participate in the event, each institution had to first undertake a self-assessment of their institutions capacity in TEL against the Performance Indicators in the Benchmarks, and then be willing to share that self-assessment with the other institutions involved at the Summit. As part of their commitment to the activity, each institution had to undertake to assess, at a minimum, two of the benchmarks, with some institutions doing three, four or five, with one institution choosing to do all eight.

Participants and Engagement

The following is a list of the institutions who participated in the event, with an indication of which Benchmarks they undertook in preparation.

Institution	BM 1	BM 2	BM 3	BM 4	BM 5	BM 6	BM 7	BM 8
Asia Pacific International College				X			X	
Auckland University			X					
Auckland University of Technology						X		X
Australian Catholic University		X			X	X		
Christchurch Polytechnic	X			X				
Curtin University		X			X			
Federation University	X				X	X		X
Flinders University		X		X				
Lincoln University		X		X				
Macquarie University			X		X			
Open University, UK	X	X	X	X				
Queensland University of Technology	X				X			
University of Canberra	X					X		
University of Otago	X	X	X	X	X			
University of New England	X				X		X	X
University of Southern Queensland					X	X	X	X
University of South Africa	X		X		X			
University of the South Pacific			X	X				
University of Technology Sydney		X		X				
University of Western Australia			X		X			
University of Western Sydney	X			X		X		
University of Wollongong					X	X	X	X
Victoria University (Melbourne)	X					X		
Victoria University Wellington	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	11	8	8	10	12	9	5	6

In summary there were:

- 15 Australian institutions (14 universities and one private Higher Education provider)
- 6 New Zealand institutions (5 universities and 1 polytechnic), and
- 3 other universities, a university from UK, South Africa and the South Pacific

As previously indicated, not all the institutions participating in this event were ACode institutions, and each had asked to be involved for a range of reasons. However, this was also seen as a good opportunity for ACode to reach out to those currently not engaged in the network.



Each institution was allowed to bring along two representatives to the Summit, and in the end there were 36 participants present, with an additional two delegates participating virtually from the University of South Africa (as they had been unable to secure funding for travel).

Each institution was also asked to sign a Code of Conduct document (available from: <http://www.acode.edu.au/course/view.php?id=16>) prior to their participation, as it was deemed that potentially sensitive information would be shared at this activity; information that would need to be held in confidence by the participants.



The Summit Program and activities

The Summit started on the evening of Sunday 1 July in the Learning and Teaching Centre at Macquarie University, with a series of activities designed to give participants a good understanding of the context for all the activities that they would be engage with on the Monday and Tuesday. Dinner was served during this time and we were fortunate to be joined by Natalie Laifer, from the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT), who address us on behalf of OLT (as one of the key sponsors). The following two days were dedicated to the Benchmarking activities and were held in the Macquarie Graduate School of Management. Please refer to Appendix A for the full Summit Agenda.

Prior to the Summit each institution had submitted their self-assessments in the week prior, so they could be loaded into a wiki page, to then be shared during the respective benchmarking session. An example of what this looked like is seen in the figure below:

Institution	PI-1	PI-2	PI-3	PI-4	PI-5	PI-6	PI-7	PI-8
Institution 1	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2
Institution 2	5	4	4	3	4	4	3	3
Institution 3	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3
Institution 4	4	3	2	3	3	2	3	1
Institution 5	5	3	3	2	2	3	2	1
Institution 6	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	2
Institution 7	4	3	4	2	2	2	4	2
Institution 8	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	1
Institution 9	4	4	5	2	2	4	5	3

Each institution then took it in turns to briefly describe how they came to give themselves their particular rating. This, in many cases, generated quite lively discussion. But more importantly, each institution was then able to review their self-assessment.

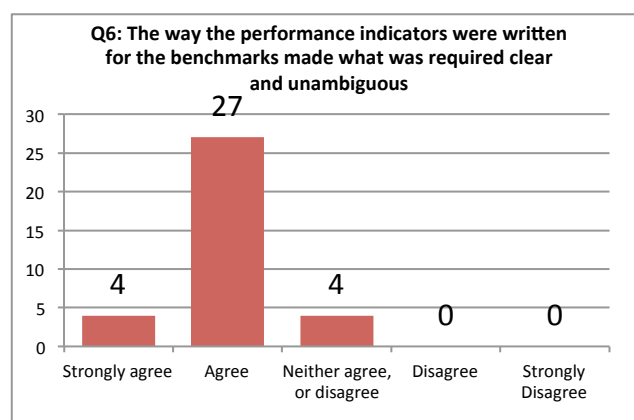
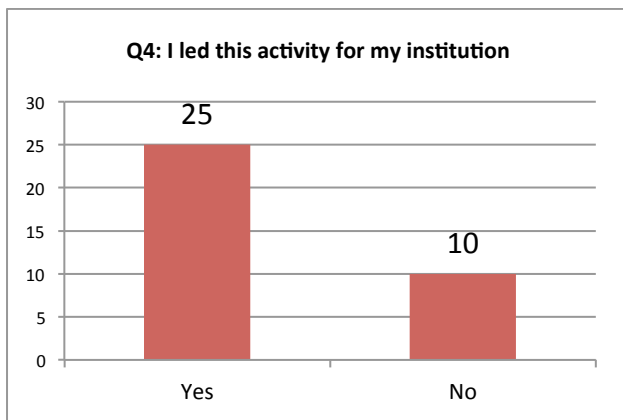
Fortunately, once the broader group had been through this activity a couple of times things began moving very smoothly. So much so that some of the scheduled sessions were able to be combined, allowing the activity to finish earlier than scheduled on both the Monday and Tuesday.



Summit Evaluation

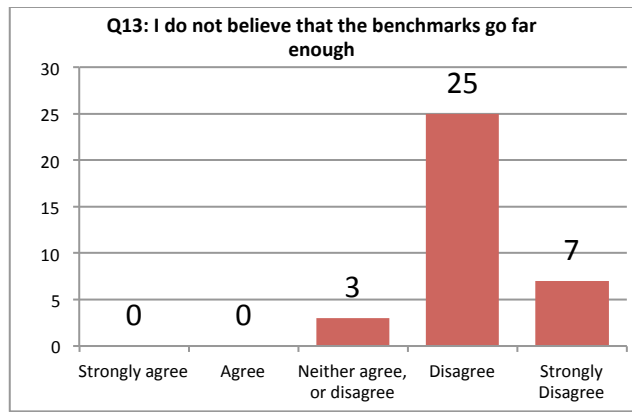
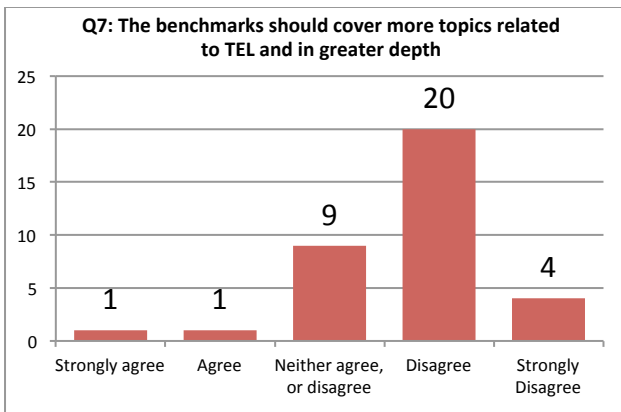
Of the total 38 participants, 35 participants completed the online evaluation survey. The survey contained a total of 30 questions; 5 questions related to the participant’s institution, 20 questions related to the activities and resources associated with the Summit and their participation in the event, and then 5 open ended response questions seeking to elicit further direction and feedback for future activities of this nature. To help preserve anonymity the data contained in the first section of the survey (containing institutional and personal identifiers) is held separately to the other responses and no linkages will be made within this, or subsequent reports.

The following data has been analysed for frequency of response and a thematic analysis of the qualitative data has been performed. This report contains a summary of this data and findings. Data where respondent reported that a question was not directly relevant to them were removed from the count.

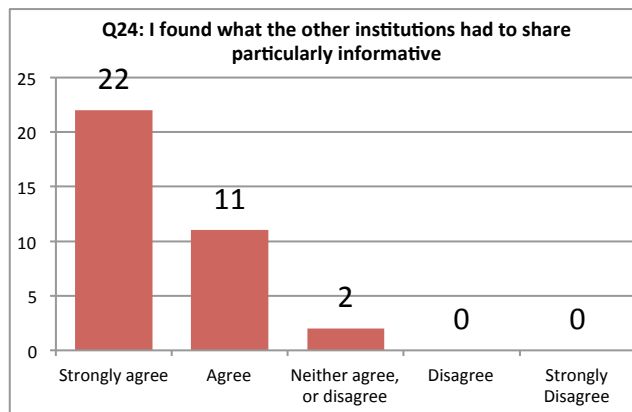
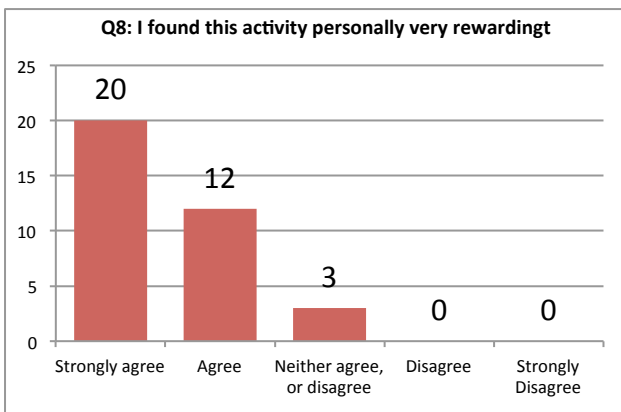


The majority of respondents (71%) led the activity for their institution, with the remaining 10 assisting with this activity (response contained in Question 5).

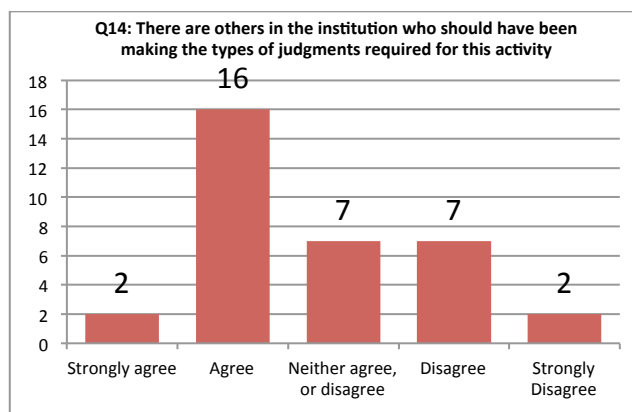
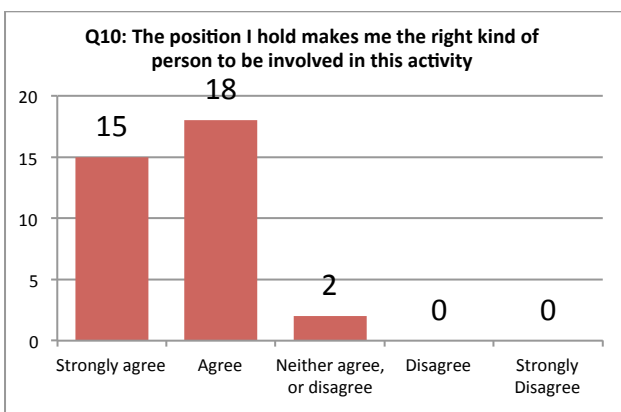
An extremely pleasing result (one of many) was that 88.6% of participants agreed, or strongly agreed that the way the Performance Indicators had been formed within the Benchmarks made what was required clear and unambiguous (Question 6). Although 4 participants chose not to respond in the affirmative or negative, nobody disagreed with this. This has certainly justified the work of the review group who spent quite some time ensuring these indicators flowed well.



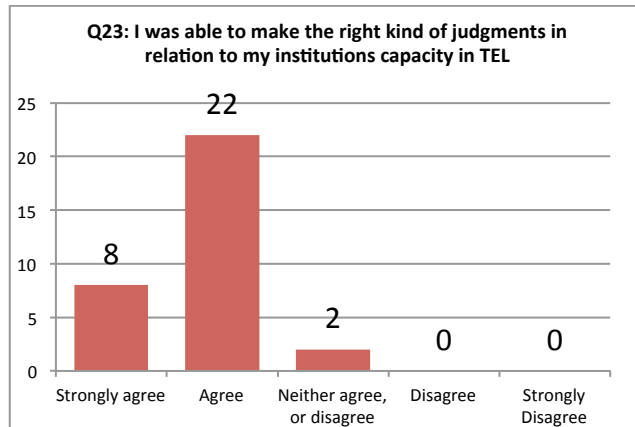
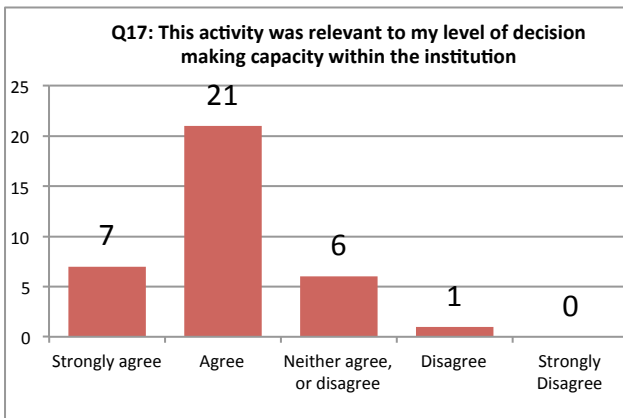
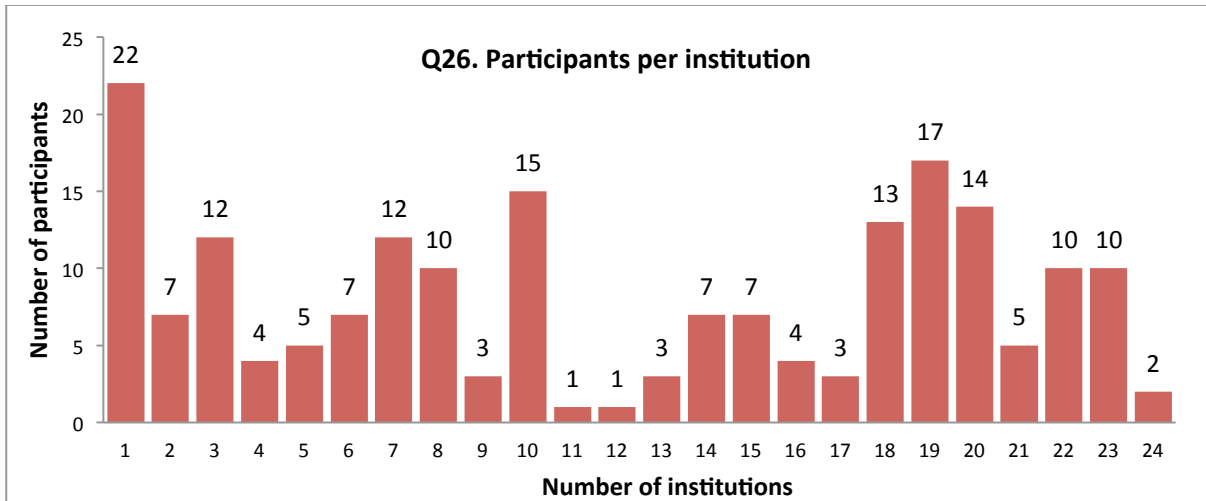
The vast majority (69%) of participants also felt that the benchmarks, as they stand, covered sufficient ground, with only 2 participants expressing some room for expansion (Question 7). This question was extended further, in Question (Q) 13, when asked if the benchmarks went far enough. In this particular case there was no disagreement, with 91% believing they did go far enough.



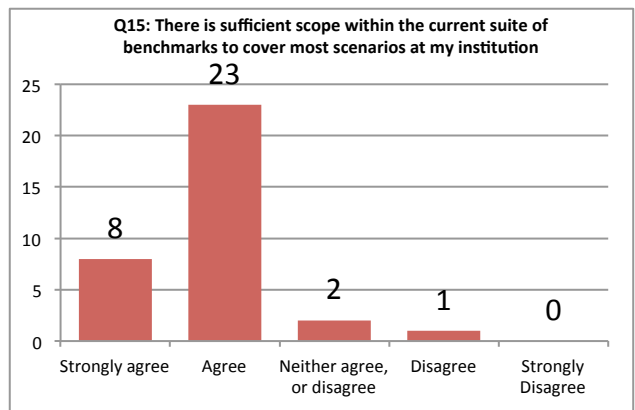
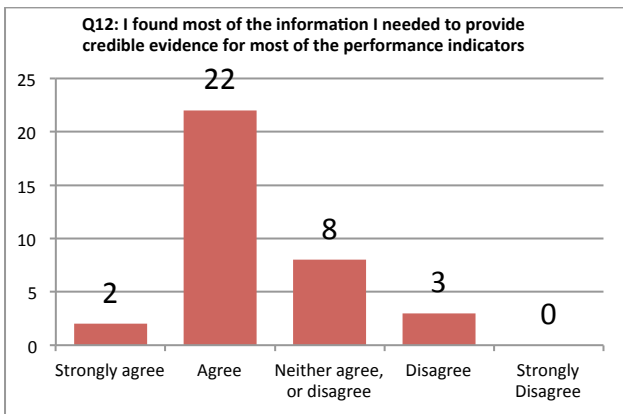
In Q8 it can be seen that 91% of the participant had found this activity personally very rewarding. One could suggest this was partly due to the fact that 91% had also found that what the other institutions had to share particularly informative (Q24). Herein lies the heart and the beauty of this type of activity.



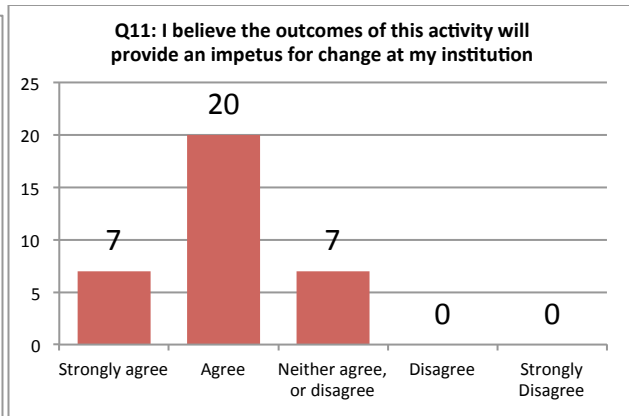
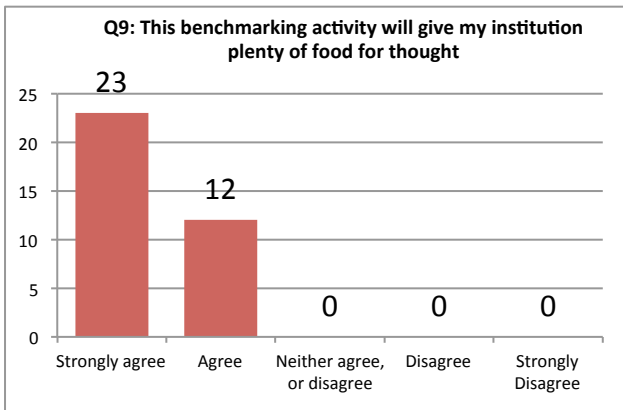
In Q10, 94% of the participants agreed, or strongly agreed that they were the right people to be involved in this type of activity on behalf of their institution. However, it is seen in the responses to Q14 that 51% felt that there were others within their institution who could/should have also been involved in this activity. This can also be partly explained, when we look at the responses to Q26 and see that there were 10 institutions who did not consult very widely, with 5 or less staff participating in their self-assessment. The average number of participant per institution was 8, with lowest being 1 (x2) and the highest 22.



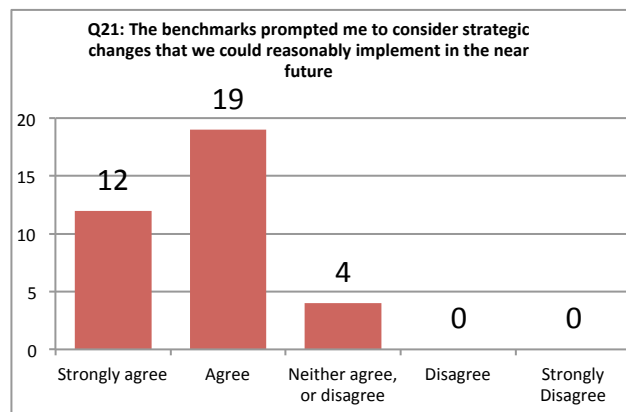
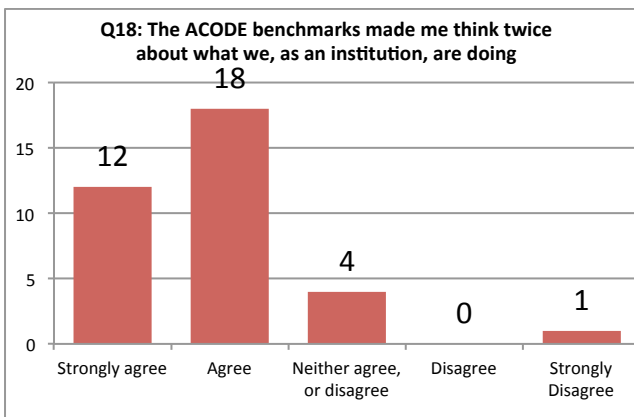
Questions 17 and 23 provide a clear indication that the Benchmarking activity was targeted at the right types of people (80%), with just one person disagreeing (Q17), and that they (94%) clearly felt that they had the capacity to make the right types of judgment on behalf of their institution.



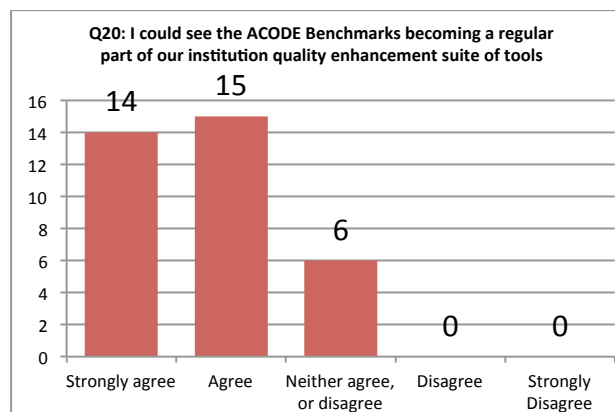
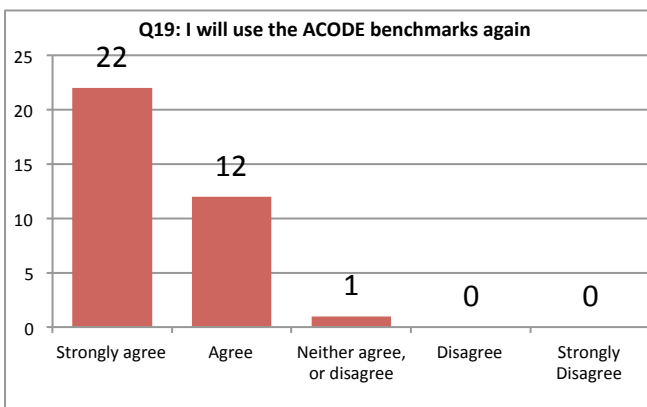
In the majority of cases (69%) participants agreed that they were able to source sufficient and credible evidence to support their judgments around the performance indicators (Q12), while 89% agreed that there was sufficient scope within the indicators to cover most of their scenarios. Again this is a very pleasing result, and speaks to the validity of this tool.



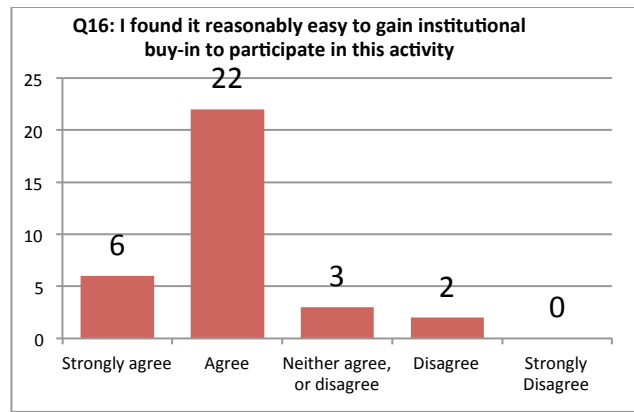
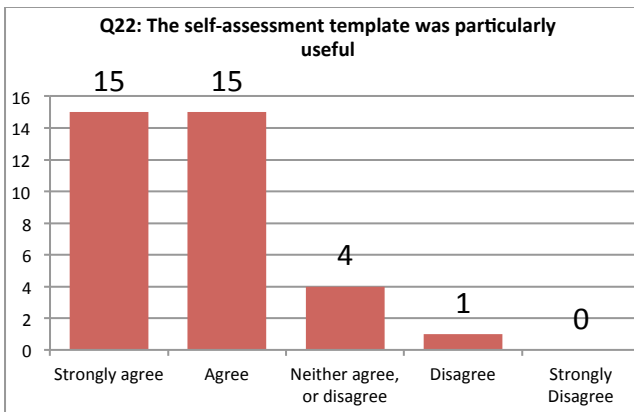
Interestingly, in Q9, 100% of participants agreed that the Benchmarking Activity had given their institution plenty of room for thought and then, of these, 79% agreed that this would provide an impetus for change within their institution (Q11).



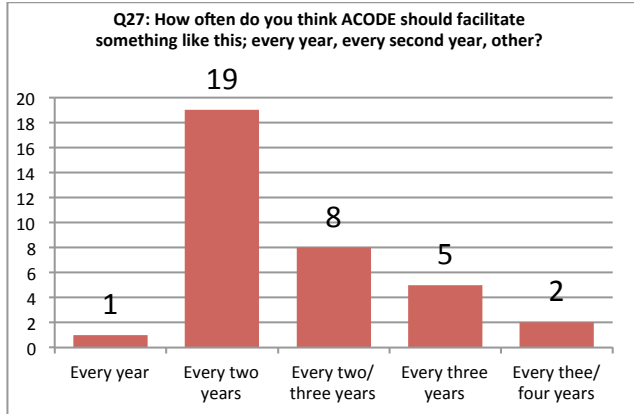
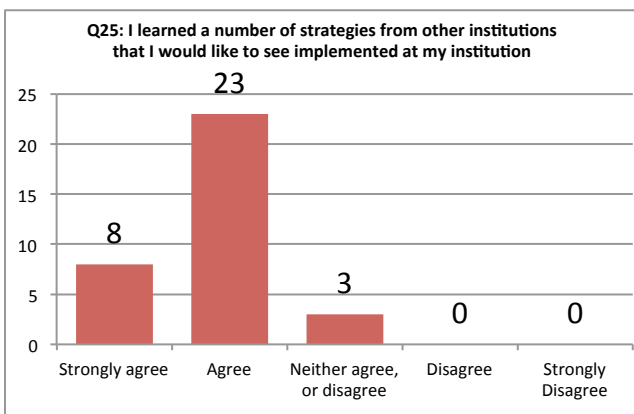
The benchmarks were designed to help institutions critically self-assess their capacity in TEL and Q18 clearly demonstrates that this is precisely what they are doing, with 86% of respondents agreeing that they were made to think twice about what their institution was doing in this space. Similarly Q21 provides a clear indication that the benchmarks have prompted some 89% of participants to consider some strategic change that could be implemented, based on undertaking this activity.



In question 19 and 20 we see participants clearly wanting to engage with this tool again in the future (97%) and that they see (89%) there is a real place for the Benchmarks within the suite of quality enhancement tools used by their institution.



It was certainly pleasing to see that 86% of the participants found the newly formed self-assessment template very useful in undertaking their internal activities (Q22). While on a different note 80% had found it reasonably easy to garner institutional buy-in to participate in this event (Q16).



Not dissimilar to Q21, Q25 extends the thought that participant (some 89%) believed they had learned some strategies from others that could be implemented at their institution.

When asked how often they would like to undertake a Benchmarking activity like the majority indicated that every second year was their preference, 23% indicated every two/three years was their preference and 14% said every third year.

Question 28

When participants were asked, how would they have done things differently in the inter-institutional activity, their comments broadly fell into six main categories (where specific themes were identified on a number of occasions). The advice provided by the participant included:

1. Extend the activity to three days to give sufficient time for small group work and more discussions, so the PIs can be dealt with in more depth.
2. Analyse more of the data beforehand for theming purposes.
3. Have the opportunity to share more evidence around the PIs and provide some examples of what the different levels may look like.
4. Do the benchmarks in order.
5. Broaden internal self-assessment groups to get more robust internal data.
6. Generally very satisfied with how it was handled.

Although other suggestions were made, these were isolated and not reportable at this level. However, it is suggested that closer scrutiny of these comments be made by the ACode Executive for future consideration.

Question 29

Participants were then provided an opportunity to make further comments that would help make the Benchmarks, or the supporting documentation, more user-friendly, or to identify things they felt might be missing. These comments fell into five main categories (where specific themes were identified on a number of occasions).

1. ACode should look to develop a series of web-based forms for the self-assessment and consolidation documents, potentially linking this with a collaboration space in the future.
2. That some good practice examples be developed to help participants as they come to self-assess.
3. That more details around the PIs be provided in the Session Notes document.
4. Further reduce some of the repetition within the PIs.
5. Include more terms in the Glossary and further simplify some of the language used in the document.

Although other suggestions were made, these were isolated and not reportable at this level. However, it is suggested that closer scrutiny of these comments be made by the ACode Executive for future consideration.

Question 30

Participants were finally provided with an opportunity to make unguided (open) comments. Overwhelmingly these comments were of a very complimentary nature, congratulating ACode on the work that went into refreshing the benchmarks and for facilitating the Inter-institutional Summit.

The following two comments in particular exemplify the overall sentiment expressed in the responses

“Great opportunity to meet and share where everyone is at. The benchmarking exercise is a great self reflective practice that is reinforced through the feedback and deliberation from other institutions.”

“I really enjoyed this Benchmarking Summit, I have learned a lot from the inter-institutional activity and will definitely be sharing and pushing for these benchmarks to be accepted at our institution. Thank you for facilitating this and look forward to the institution following up with the benchmarks in the future.”

Next steps

At the conclusion of the event the benchmarking review team met to discuss the activity and to understand if there were any further changes needed to the benchmarks now they had been so thoroughly tested. Some minor adjustments were identified and there was a proposal that Benchmarks 7 and 8 be merged. However, after further investigation and discussions with those institutions who undertook those benchmarks, it is less likely that this would be the best course of action at this time. Notwithstanding, as Benchmarks 7 and 8 are used more fully in the future it would be worth revisiting this decision. At this same time it would be also worth investigating if benchmarks 5 and 6 should also be merged, as the same logic/methodology is used in their construction.

Consequently, there are two things that now need to be considered for the future of the Benchmarks. The first is, do they stay the same for the time being, or do we adjust now to reflect some of the commentary

coming back from those who have used them? Secondly, is ACODE willing to commit to facilitating a formal benchmarking activity, notionally, every second year?

Recommendations for future iterations of the Benchmarks

The following recommendations are made:

1. That over the next few months some minor adjustments be made to the Benchmarks, based on those things identified by the Review Group and from the Evaluation Survey.
2. That the final set of benchmarks be presented and endorsed at the ACODE 66 business meeting in Melbourne.
3. That future iterations of the Benchmarks look to establish if there is a stronger case to merge Benchmarks 7 and 8, and by extension Benchmarks 5 and 6 that use a similar methodology.

Recommendations for future Benchmarking activities

The following recommendations are made:

4. That ACODE agree to facilitate a formal benchmarking activity every second year and that there be allowance for this made within business processes, similar for that of the LTLI. In doing so, consideration should be given to whether the activity should stretch over three full days.
5. That a series of online tools and a collaboration space be established within the ACODE site to make it easier for institutions to engage in formal inter-institutional benchmarking activities.
6. When the online collaborative space is established, that an area be provided to allow institutions to share good practice examples that align with the performance indicators.

Project dissemination

Current activity

Since the completion of the Summit, the outcomes of this activity have been reported through two main avenues. The first was a paper presented to the Digital Rural Futures Conference on 26 June entitled 'Benchmarking for future growth, a must for institutions with a strong regional focus: You are not alone' (Sankey and Carter, 2014) and the second was an article that appeared in Campus Review on 14 July, entitled 'Weapons of mass-instruction' (Bastian, 2014).

Future activities

Two further activities are planned for the ascilite 2014 Conference to be held in Dunedin in November 2014. The first of these is a Sharing Practice session entitled 'Benchmarking your capacity for technology enhanced learning: Helping you take the reins. In this session attendees will be asked to identify potential partners to benchmark with in the future and prepare some strategies to help them build relationships and stronger ties with colleagues across the sector. Each participant will then develop a plan of action to help their institution enhance its capacity in the area of TEL. The second activity at ascilite will be and a full refereed paper and presentation entitled 'Benchmarking for technology enhanced learning: Taking the next step in the journey'.

Further to this, the next iteration of the Benchmarks (Version 3.1) will be presented to the ACODE 66 meeting scheduled to be held in Melbourne in November 2014.

Other formal dissemination activities will be planned over the next few months, including a journal submission.

My perspective

As the facilitator of the ACode Benchmarking Refresh Project I found the exercise challenging, exciting and extremely rewarding. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole process and could not have been happier with the outcome, and particularly the collegiality demonstrated by all involved. If it had not been for the commitment and enthusiasm of the participants, initially by the reviewers involved in the refresh of the benchmarks, and then by all involved in the inter-institutional activity, this project would not have been the great success it has been.

Conclusion

Many of the issues we face in our institutions can be remediated by simply taking the time to self-assess against a set of quality indicators, like those found in the ACode Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning. However, when we then look to further extend our self-reflection, by sharing our current practice with those in similar circumstances, this provides the impetus for a truly dynamic learning activity.

An activity, like the one we recently experienced in the Inter-institutional Benchmarking Summit, has provided the opportunity for many of us to build relationships and stronger ties (not competing) with our colleagues. In the broader context it has also provided our institutions with some of the wherewithal to meet the unique challenges of building a strong digital future.

If the data presented in the evaluation of the Benchmarking Summit is any indicator, the value of this form of activity, to the institutions involved and ultimately the sector, is very significant. It is clear that the ACode Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning have provided a unique catalyst to help make this happen. To that end we look forward to the opportunity of ACode formalising its commitment to an ongoing use of this tool to help institutions establish and regular commitment to the use of these Benchmarks as one way of ensuring there is a level of quality in their technology enhanced learning practices.

References

- Bridgland, A. & Goodacre, C.T. (2005). Benchmarking in higher education: a framework for benchmarking for quality improvement purposes. *Proceedings of Educause Australasia*, Auckland, New Zealand, 5-8 April.
- Sankey, M., & Carter, H. (2014). Benchmarking for future growth, a must for institutions with a strong regional focus: You are not alone. *Proceedings of The Digital Rural Futures Conference*. University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba. 25-27 June.
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Appendix A. ACODE Inter-Institutional Summit Agenda

Sunday, 1 June – Building E6B – Room 136

From 5.00	Arrival and registration
6.30 – 8.30	Welcome and scene setting (how it will all work) Introductions (each institutional leader to speak for 2 minutes) Dinner (generous finger foods) Address – Natalie Laifer, Office for Learning and Teaching Panel Session – ‘How and why the Benchmarks changed’

Monday, 2 June –MGSM – Room 265/7

8:00 – 8:30	Arrival tea and coffee Official welcome and photographs
8:30 – 10:30	Peer review - Benchmark 4
10.30 – 10.45	Short break over Morning Tea
10: 45 – 12.45	Peer review - Benchmark 5
12:45 – 1:30	Lunch
1:30 – 3:30	Peer review - Benchmark 6
3.30 – 3.45	Short break over Afternoon tea
3:45 – 5:45	Peer review - Benchmark 7
5.45 – 7.00	Early dinner – MGSM Dining room
7:00 – 8:30	Peer review - Benchmark 2

Tuesday, 3 June – MGSM – Room 265/7

8:00 – 8:30	Arrival tea and coffee and short review of day 1
8:30 – 10:30	Peer review - Benchmark 8
10.30 – 10.45	Short break over Morning Tea
10: 45 – 12.45	Peer review - Benchmark 1
12:45 – 1:30	Lunch
1:30 – 3:30	Peer review - Benchmark 3
3.30 – 3.45	Short break over Afternoon tea
3:45 – 4:45	Discussions/reflections on the Summit – What should come next, what could be improved?
4:45 – 5.00	Concluding remarks – President ACODE