KING CEASOR UNIVERSITY

BENCHMARKING POLICY

MAY 2024

BENCHMARKING POLICY

FOREWORD

At KCU, we are unwavering in our commitment to delivering a high-quality education that not only meets but exceeds the expectations of our students, faculty, and stakeholders. Central to this commitment is our dedication to continuous improvement and quality enhancement, achieved through robust benchmarking processes and procedures.

Benchmarking is a vital tool for comparing our university's performance and standards with those of our peers. It allows us to monitor our relative performance, identify gaps, and seek fresh approaches to drive improvements. Through benchmarking, we can set goals, establish priorities for change and resource allocation, and implement change processes based on empirical evidence.

Our benchmarking policy is carefully designed to align with KCU's vision and mission. By systematically examining and adopting best practices from leading universities, we ensure that our administrative and academic practices remain at the forefront of excellence. This process of continual learning and adaptation enables us to maintain the highest standards of academic performance and institutional effectiveness.

Benchmarking at KCU will address broad university-wide issues or specific matters affecting individual areas. It can be strategic, focusing on priority issues, cyclical, addressing various areas on a regular basis, or ad-hoc, taking advantage of emerging opportunities. Regardless of the scope, our commitment to benchmarking fosters an environment where innovation thrives, and excellence is the norm.
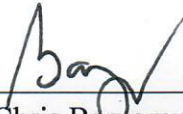
As we look to the future, I am confident that our relentless pursuit of excellence through benchmarking will continue to propel KCU to new heights. Together, we will build on our successes, learn from the best, and ensure that KCU remains a beacon of quality education and outstanding performance.

Dr. Charity Basaza Mulenga
VICE CHANCELLOR

Approval

This policy has been approved on the ..28.th....day of ....JUNE.........the year..2024

Signed:

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Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi
CHAIRPERSON, KCU COUNCIL

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Dr. Charity Basaza Mulenga
VICE-CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY VISION AND MISSION

Vision
An innovation driven University.

Mission
To provide a holistic education through inventive teaching, learning, and research aimed at fostering socio-economic transformation

The Motto
King Ceasor University`s corporate philosophy is personified in its motto "**Ignite the future**"

Core Values
To fulfil our mission and realize our vision, we commit ourselves to these values:

1. **Progression:** We recognize that learning never ends.

2. **Accountability:** We hold ourselves accountable for our actions and conduct our affairs in ways that promote mutual trust and public confidence.

3. **Integrity:** We hold ourselves, collectively and individually, liable to do what is right.

4. **Respect**: We treat all people with dignity, respect and impartiality.

5. **Synergy:** We recognize that we are stronger and more effective as a team than as individuals.

POLICY STATEMENT

KCU is committed to providing a high-quality education and to a continuous improvement and quality enhancement of its provision by adopting internal and external benchmarking processes and procedures. The benchmarking policy is designed to fit with the purpose of KCU vision and mission.

Therefore, the benchmarking policy will have a crucial role at the university level by improving and enhancing both the administrative as well as academic practices. This will be achieved by examining processes and models at other leading universities and adopting their techniques and approaches whenever possible in order to maintain high academic standards and performance levels.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Benchmark   A point of reference against which a matter may be measured.

Benchmarking   Benchmarking is a quality process used to compare the University's standards and performance with higher education institution peers. It allows the University to 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.

Partner   Is either a pair of persons or organisations honestly engaged together in the same activity.

1.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to the university's key areas, including management structures, academic programs, primary and support services, and relevant administrative procedures. It shall;

    1.1 Support the university's mission, values, and strategic priorities.

    1.2 Be characterized by a commitment to learning from best practices; the implementation of potential improvements arising from the findings of benchmarking projects; and the sharing of good practices once projects are completed.

    1.3 Be balanced in terms of the value received compared to the costs involved in undertaking the projects and have the approval of the relevant unit head.

This Policy does not apply to processes used on an informal and ad hoc basis to compare practices with other institutions, such as by networking or through peer review activities.

2.0 RATIONALE

    a) To fulfill the requirements for preparing self-assessment reports for external quality assurance reviews;

    b) To execute the University's mandate to lead in setting standards and initiating advancements in teaching, research, and faculty development;

    c) To implement the KCU Strategic Plan 2023/24-2027/28, with a particular focus on academic excellence;

    d) To fulfill the University's mandate to strengthen academic programs, introduce innovative initiatives, and promote research, publication, and creative work, all aimed at fostering national development.

3.0 PURPOSE

To help the university and its academic programs and units measure and enhance quality by comparing their performance against established benchmarks.

4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

This policy aims to ensure a more coordinated, considered, and systematic approach to benchmarking that supports institutional planning and the setting of performance targets. It mandates how KCU will review and quality assure the standards of its academic programs and overall provision through clear and transparent benchmarking procedures, allowing comparison with partner institutions and other similar or leading universities. The policy will be applied in compliance with the internationally recognized Benchmarking Code of Conduct.

Specific Objectives

    4.1 To continuously improve the quality and standards of the university's academic programs, administrative functions, and support services.

4.2 To identify and adopt best practices from leading institutions and organizations, thereby promoting excellence and innovation.

4.3 To enable the university to compare its performance against recognized benchmarks and peer institutions, facilitating informed decision-making.

4.4 To drive targeted improvement initiatives based on benchmarking findings, ensuring alignment with the university's strategic goals.

4.5 To promote a culture of accountability and transparency by regularly assessing and reporting on performance metrics.

4.6 To support the university's strategic planning efforts by providing data and insights that inform policy development and resource allocation.

4.7 To enhance the university's competitiveness in the higher education sector by ensuring it meets or exceeds national and international standards.

4.8 To facilitate continuous learning and development within the university by encouraging a proactive approach to quality enhancement.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The policy is implemented throughout KCU where the relevant review processes and strategic focus areas are set out along with the appropriate approaches and operational priorities for implementation.

6.0 MONITORING

The responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the policy lies with the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Deans of Schools, in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Directorate. Respective reports are presented to the University Council. The existing quality management processes provide for the evaluation and support for the benchmarking processes. This policy will be revised every five years.

7.0 PRINCIPLES

The University undertakes Benchmarking in accordance with the following principles:

7.1 Benchmarking processes support the University's Objects and Strategic Plan.

7.2 Benchmarking activities are well planned, and objectives are clear and achievable. Where relevant, Benchmarking is aligned to accepted standards and good practice across the sector.

7.3 Benchmarking processes focus on learning from shared good practices, implementing potential improvements from findings, and promoting mutual interest and benefit for all parties involved.

7.4 Benchmarking activities are properly project managed, and all parties have a clear understanding of responsibility, deliverables, deadlines, scope, and goals.

7.5 Proposed Benchmarking indicators and measures are clearly documented and reviewed for alignment to structures, processes and terminology to ensure that meaningful comparisons may be made.

7.6 Benchmarking activities are (prior to inception) assessed for balance in terms of the value received from undertaking a Benchmarking process and the costs involved (including Staff time, logistics and implementation costs).

7.7 Benchmarking results are reviewed and include identification of good practices as well as recommendations for improvement.

7.8 Benchmarking results are reported to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic or delegate (for academic matters) or to the VC (for non-academic matters) and strategies implemented to support improvement at the University. In the case of benchmarking of institutional wide data or processes, results are reported to the Executive Council and strategies for improvement implemented as directed by the Vice Chancellor.

7.9 An evaluation of the Benchmarking methodology is undertaken to inform future Benchmarking activities.

7.10 Benchmarking is most effective when undertaken as an ongoing exercise with a view to embedding it in key processes, including governance processes relating to accreditation and re-accreditation of courses, course review process and the annual course monitoring process. Standards Benchmarking is also embedded in external accreditation by relevant professional bodies.

The following should be taken into account where an exchange of information is involved:

7.11 **Confidentiality:** All benchmarking exchanges should be treated as confidential. Hence, the publication and external communication of findings should not occur without the permission of all partners involved in the project;

7.12 **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;

7.13 **Exchange:** The type or level of information exchanged should be comparable between the benchmarking partners; and

7.14 **Intellectual Property:** All rights relating to any intellectual property developed in the course of any benchmarking activity need to be negotiated and recorded by the relevant partners.

8.0 APPROACHES TO BENCHMARKING

8.1   Focus of comparison may involve comparisons of processes, policies, standards and/or performance data. Data may relate to, for example, enrolment trends; student attrition and retention rates; pass rates; grade distributions; Student feedback results (such as from the Survey); staffing profile (numbers, employment types and/or qualifications); course structures; Staff satisfaction results; research publications; scholarships; and research grants.

8.2   Benchmarking activities may be focused at a course level, discipline (or Field of Education) or at the institutional level. Comparisons may be made on a state, national, or international basis and may involve all other providers in the sector, a sample of other providers or a single institution. Alternatively, a Benchmarking partner may be outside the tertiary education sector if such an organization demonstrates better practice.

8.3   Alternatively internal benchmarking across Schools or areas of the University may also be undertaken in relation to Staff or Student feedback results.

9.0 EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONS AND/OR ORGANIZATIONS

A legal agreement or Memorandum of Understanding ('Agreement') must be entered into for formal Benchmarking activities involving a proposed arrangement with one or more external institutions or organizations and an exchange of information involving information about the University's activities that:

9.1   may be deemed commercial in confidence or sensitive information (including relating to privacy and intellectual property); and/or

9.2   has the potential to cause reputational damage to the University; and/or

9.3   relates to institutional wide activities

9.4   the Agreement must: clarify the purposes for which information is to be used, role and responsibilities of the institutions involved and mutual objectives; ensure the information can only be used for the express purpose set out in the Agreement;

9.5.   ensure confidentiality, in particular that there should be no external communication of benchmarking findings without the express written permission of all parties;

9.6   provide for equal access to information between all parties; and

9.7   clarify intellectual property ownership of the Benchmarking findings/results.

10.0 RECORDING

10.1   A central register of all formal Benchmarking Agreements will be maintained by the Deputy Vice Chancellor and a copy by the Quality Assurance Unit.

11.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

11.1   Senior management and respective offices are responsible for guiding and supervising the execution of the Bench marking policy.

11.2   Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic (or their delegate) has responsibility for implementing improvement strategies based on Benchmarking results for academic matters.

11.3   The QA Unit under as directed by the VC has responsibility for implementing improvement strategies based on Benchmarking results for non-academic matters.

11.4   Monitoring: The responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the policy lies with the DVC in collaboration with Academic Registrar, Deans of Schools and the Quality Assurance Unit. Respective reports are presented to the University Council (UC). The existing Quality Management processes provide for the evaluation and support for the benchmarking processes. The policy will be revised and updated as per the KCU schedule for revisiting and updating its bylaws and policies or when deemed necessary.

12.0 BENCHMARKING PROCEDURE

A. Plan.

12.1   **Determine the benchmark target:** KCU has to determine first the process and/or the activity it wants to improve and the level of change. The starting point for KCU to set its benchmark target will be the university profile and its capacity, its willingness to change, the availability of resources and data needed. All these factors impact the nature and size of the benchmarking process.

12.2   **Determine universities to be benchmarked:** KCU will look at competitors it wants to compare itself against by identifying the best universities working in the same field whose practices can match KCU requirements and can be easily adopted and adapted by KCU. KCU starts by developing its competitors list, and then selects the best universities which have similar characteristics in terms of profile, size and type of

activities as KCU. This will be more profitable than comparing with totally different higher education institutions.

12.3   **Collect data:** The implementation of this step will result in gathering data that can be used directly from other universities to enhance KCU's performance. The data will be collected through primary and/or secondary research about the colleges, universities, or other organizations being studied. At the end of this stage KCU will have complete, accurate, and relevant data against which it compares its processes with the other universities.

B. Analyze

12.4   **Determine the gap:** This step involves analyzing the data collected, discovering to what degree the present performance lags behind the best practice in each area and combining the best features from the best practices into an ideal process. At this point, the differences or gaps in performance between the universities being benchmarked will be identified.

12.5   **Determine future trends:** This step allows setting a target of what KCU wants to achieve and timeframes for getting there. During this step, KCU team will examine the past performance in relation to its competitors, forecast potential change and project future performance. Upon completing this step KCU will have identified the benefits of implementing the proposed benchmarking changes.

12.6   **Share results:** To keep the team involved KCU has to share and communicate the benchmarking information and results with its staff in order to motivate them to carry out changes. This also helps set the standards and show the team what is expected of them in the implementation phase.

12.7   **Establish goals:** This step involves revising goals to close the performance gap determined and achieving consensus on those goals. KCU has to establish clear goals that its management approves and that all employees understand.

12.8   **Develop Action Plans:** Develop an Action Plan that works with the goals and timelines that KCU has established for its team. Use the Action Plan to clarify to each member of the team what is expected of them and the critical success factors associated with these targets.

12.9   **Implement plans and monitor results:** This step involves executing the approved best-practice procedures and the day-to-day monitoring of changes. This step will result in a closely watched process in which deviations from the plan will be corrected and the ultimate goals achieved.

12.10   **Recalibrate benchmarks:** The purpose of recalibration is to adjust and update the benchmarks to assure that KCU has based and used the best methods and practices in its benchmarking process.

C. 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 audit.

13.0 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:

13.1   **Strategic Benchmarking:** 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.

13.2   **Performance Benchmarking:** 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.

13.3 **Functional Benchmarking:** Used to compare and improve functional areas in the organization such as Human Resources or Finance.

13.4   **Process Benchmarking:** Used when 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.

13.5 **Internal Benchmarking:** 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.

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

13.7 **Quantitative Benchmarking:** 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.

13.8 **Qualitative Benchmarking:** 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 practices.

14.0 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 access only) 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. These may include:

14.1   A gap analysis

14.2   A discussion of best practice examples

14.3   Recommendations for the adaptation of initiatives to King Ceasor University context.

14.4   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 Unit.

APPENDIX 1

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	
Analyse 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)	