

Board of Governors			
Statement on use of Benchmarking/Comparative Data			
Department	Board of Governors		
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Authorized by:	Board of Governors		
Implementation by:	Governors, Executive Officers		
Reference:	STABOG2021052		
Replaced:	n/a		
Version No:	1	Approval Committee:	VCB Nominations & Governance Committee 10/12/20 Board of Governors 5/3/21
Date approved:	5/3/21	Minute no:	20.39.02 20.14.03 20.60.01
Status:	Approved	Implementation Date:	March 2021
Period of approval:	3 years	Review Date:	March 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Benchmarking is a common practice and sensible exercise to establish baselines, define best practices, identify improvement opportunities and create a competitive environment within an organization. At its best, it can be used as a tool to help the University evaluate and prioritize improvement opportunities.

1.2 Benchmarking focuses on measures such quality, time, cost, and effectiveness; and is an ongoing process which assists in identifying possible performance issues. There are several forms of benchmarking and they can be categorized in various ways, but primarily the University uses the following:

- a. **Internal benchmarking:** involves the University comparing its performance in certain areas with the same data from prior years and/or another area of the University.
- b. **External benchmarking:** involves comparing the University's position within the Higher Education Sector as a whole or with a section of it in order to identify sector leading performance targets. This helps inform the University about whether internal performance targets and achievements are comparable, better or worse than its competitors or the sector as a whole.

1.3 The Higher Education Statistics Agency ([HESA](#)) collects, analyses, assures and publishes information about UK Higher Education and is a useful source of data against which to compare the University's performance across various categories: UK-Wide, Wales, quartiles, universities of a similar size or with similar characteristics.

1.4 HEFCW publishes an [Information Toolkit for Governors](#) periodically, and this is reviewed

by the Board of Governors upon publication. This provides a retrospective comparison of Welsh Universities' performance, based on HESA data, around financial health, students and quality, research and knowledge transfer, equality and diversity, and estates.

1.5 The Board of Governors has established a set of Reporting Key Performance Indicators (KPI) linked to the University's Vision and Strategy 2025. Where feasible and appropriate, external benchmarking data are provided, in addition to internal data, against KPIs for the Board to assess performance in the wider context as well as against internal targets and past performance.

2. BENCHMARKING DATA

2.1 The following data sets have been established for the Board of Governors to assist in effective evaluation of the actual and comparative performance of the University.

Type of Report	Nature of benchmarking	Frequency and timing
Financial Management Report	<p>Internal: performance indicators and targets relating to operating surplus (deficit), liquidity cash generation, bank balance and staff costs.</p> <p>External: Higher Education Financial Statements Benchmarking (External Auditors)</p>	<p>At every Board meeting</p> <p>Annually (Spring)</p>
Key Performance Indicator Report	<p>Internal: performance indicators and targets linked to the Vision and Strategy 2025 relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teaching that Inspires</i> – NSS outcomes, employability and overall student numbers • <i>Research that Transforms</i> - proportion of staff with PhDs and research, collaborative and contract income • <i>Engagement that Enables</i> – International student numbers, TNE student numbers/income and consultancy & enterprise income • <i>Structure that Sustains</i> - operational surplus/deficit, delivery against Campus 2025 objectives and staff turnover. <p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teaching that Inspires:</i> NSS outcomes for the UK and Wales (all questions) and Graduate Outcomes survey for UK and Wales -percentage in work or further study in Wales and graduate level employment • <i>Engagement that Enables:</i> consultancy and enterprise income – HEBCIS Survey data • <i>Structure that Sustains:</i> staff turnover - UCEA workforce report data. 	Annually (Autumn)
Student retention	<p>Internal: institutional prior years' performance</p> <p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuation rates of Universities of a similar size • Continuation rates of Universities with a similar widening participation profile. • Full-time first-degree entrants who continue or qualify at same Higher Education 	<p>At every Board meeting</p> <p>Annually (Summer)</p>

Type of Report	Nature of benchmarking	Frequency and timing
	Provider following year of entry.	
Student recruitment	Internal: institutional prior years' performance External: all UCAS and UCAS competitor application data	During the recruitment cycle – three Board meetings per year.
National Students Survey	Internal: institutional prior years' performance overall and across all questions External: HE sector – UK-wide, UK top quartile, Wales and HESA benchmark across all questions.	Annually (Summer)
Graduate Outcomes	Internal: institutional prior years' performance External: HE sector – UK-wide and Wales: response rates, mode and level of activity, subject groupings, occupations and graduate salaries.	Annually (Summer) from 2020
Annual Estates Report	Internal: institutional prior years' performance relating to energy and sustainability – water usage, carbon emissions, waste recycling and energy costs and reductions. External: estate condition, maintenance costs, waste management	Annually (Autumn)

3. Review

- 3.1 As a result of the Commitments to Action arising from the Review of Governance in Wales (Camm) the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCW) was tasked to determine a minimum common data set for all universities in Wales for adoption by each institution. Upon completion of that work this document will be reviewed.

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