



Leading in Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching

**Benchmarks for Technology
Enhanced Learning**

**Inter-Institutional Benchmarking Summit
2016**

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Glossary of Terms

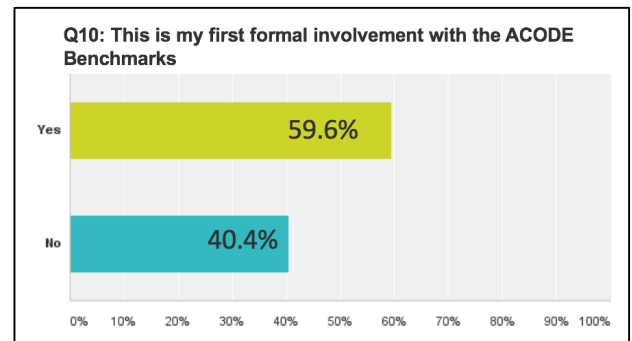
Term	Description	Term	Description
ACODE	Australasian Council on Online Distance and E-learning	TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality Agency
OLT	Office for Learning and Teaching	LTLI	Learning Technologies Leadership Institute
TEL	Technology enhanced learning	MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses
USQ	University of Southern Queensland	PIs	Performance Indicators

Introduction

In early 2014, a group of six ACODE representatives undertook the task of updating the ADODE Benchmarks and then ran the first ACODE sponsored Benchmarking Summit in Sydney in June 2014. Twenty four (24) institutions from 5 countries participated in this event. This was deemed a huge success and on the back of this ACODE agreed to facilitate such an event every two years, in the alternate year to the Learning Technologies Leadership Institute (LTLI). This year (2016) we again ran a very successful event at the University of Canberra in June. On this occasion we had 50 participants representing 27 institution, again from 5 countries.

Importantly this was the first time many of the institutions involved had formally used the Benchmarks.

This report highlights the main activities of this most recent event and provides a summary of the evaluation data participants kindly provided. Each institution involved is represented in this data and it again provides ACODE with a very clear sense that this is both a worthwhile and potentially game changing event for many of the individuals and institutions involved.



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

In preparation

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 three institution choosing to do all eight.

Participants and Engagement



Dr Carol Russell facilitating a session at the summit.

In 2014 69 benchmarks were undertaken by the 24 institutions involved, an average of 2.8 Benchmarks each. In 2016 this rose to 100 benchmarks used, at an average of 3.7 per institution.

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
Australian Catholic University	X	X			X	X		
Australian National University	X			X				
Charles Sturt University			X	X			X	
Edith Cowan University	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Federation University					X	X	X	X
La Trobe University		X	X	X				
Lincoln University	X	X	X	X				
Macquarie University	X			X	X			
Monash College	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Open University - UK			X	X				
RMIT University					X	X		X
Swinburne University					X	X		
University of Auckland		X		X	X			
University of Canberra	X	X					X	X
University of Otago	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
University of Melbourne					X	X		
University of New England			X	X	X	X		
University of Notre Dame				X	X			
University of South Africa	X		X		X			
University of the South Pacific					X	X		
University of Southern Queensland	X	X	X	X	X	X		
University of the Sunshine Coast		X	X		X			
University of Tasmania	X		X					X
University of Technology Sydney					X	X		
University of Western Sydney			X	X				X
Victoria University (Melbourne)		X		X	X			
Victoria University Wellington	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	12	12	14	16	19	13	6	8

Of the 27 institutions involved, there were:

- 20 Australian universities
- 4 New Zealand universities, and
- 3 other universities, from the UK, South Africa and the South Pacific

As was seen in 2014 not all the institutions involved were ACODE institutions, and each had asked to be involved for a range of reasons. However, this was again 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 50 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 new benchmarking tool

Stemming from the 2014 activity there were 6 recommendations. Recommendations 5 and 6 were regarding the potential development of an online tool to assist institutions load and collate their data. The first iteration of this tool was subsequently developed by my staff at the University of Southern Queensland and is now aligned with the Benchmarking area on the ADODE website.

This tool allows institutions to enter data at three levels. Firstly an individual can load their personal self-assessment data against the benchmarks they are undertaking, secondly these individual scores are aggregated for an internal review and finally there is an area for the institutions consolidated view of the data. Once the consolidated scores are entered, they are aggregated to appear with the scores from the other participating institutions.

During the Benchmarking Summit these scores are displayed and the data (evidence) associated with these scores may also be displayed. Associated with this there is a reports generating area, where institutions may download a report on the consolidated data.

This tool may also be used to enter baseline profile data from a member institution as an extension activity to the formal benchmarks. This tool was well received by the majority of those who used it on behalf of their institution.

The activity itself

The Summit started on the evening of Sunday 1 July in the Learning and Teaching Centre at the University of Canberra, 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. After the official welcome by the Deputy Vice Chancellor the open address was provided by the Chief Executive Officer of the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA), Anthony McClaran. A light dinner was served during this time. The following two days were dedicated to the Benchmarking activities and were held in the Learning and Teaching Centre. Please refer to Appendix A for the Agenda.

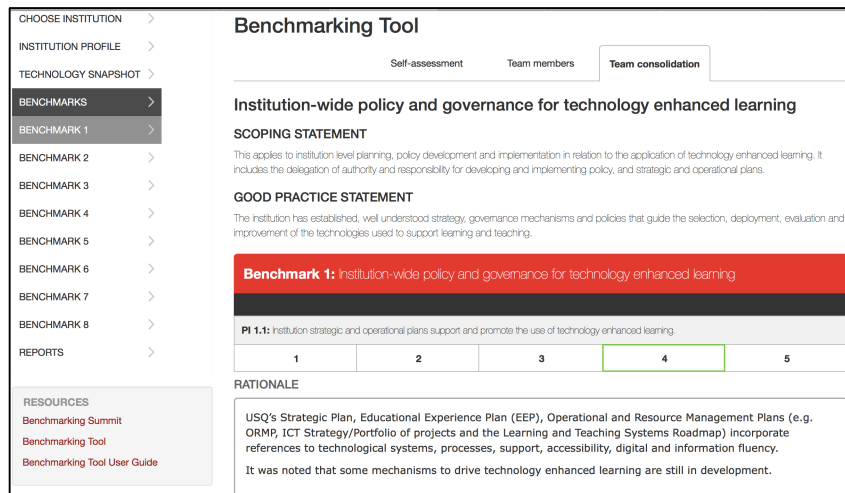


Anthony McClaran presenting the opening address

Prior to the Summit, each institution had submitted their self-assessments using the new online tool, to be shared during the respective benchmarking session. An example of what this looked like may be seen on the next page:

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.

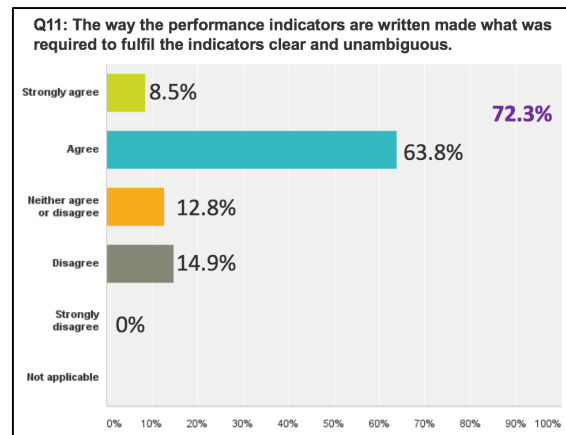
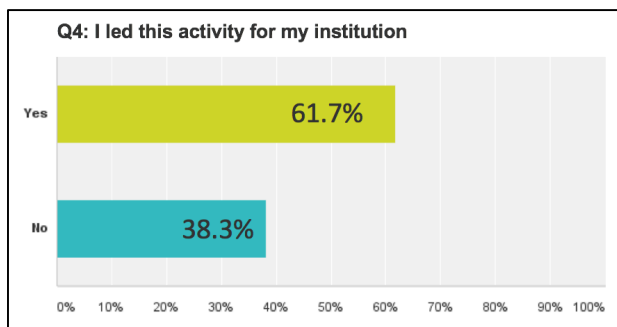


A view of the Benchmarking Tool

Summit Evaluation

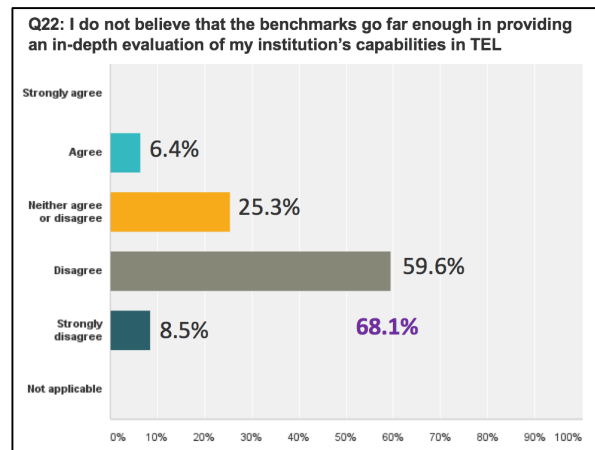
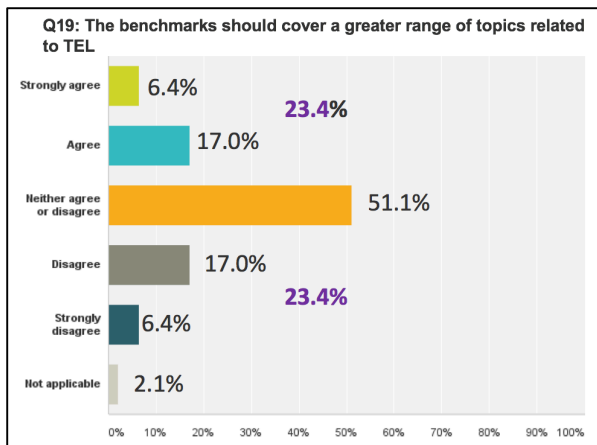
Of the total 50 participants, 47 participants completed the online evaluation survey. The survey contained a total of 40 questions; 6 questions related to the participant’s institution, 27 questions related to the activities and resources associated with the Summit and their participation in the event, and then 7 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.

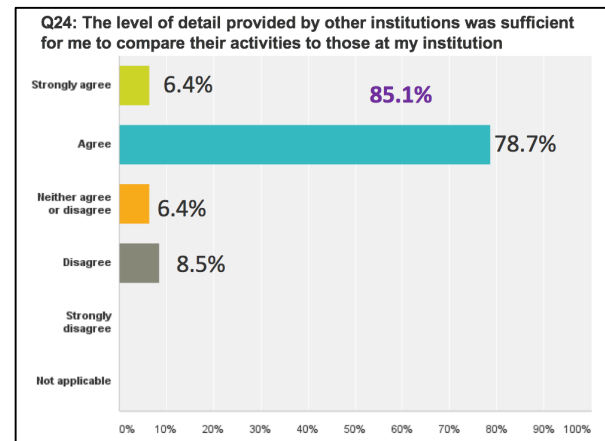
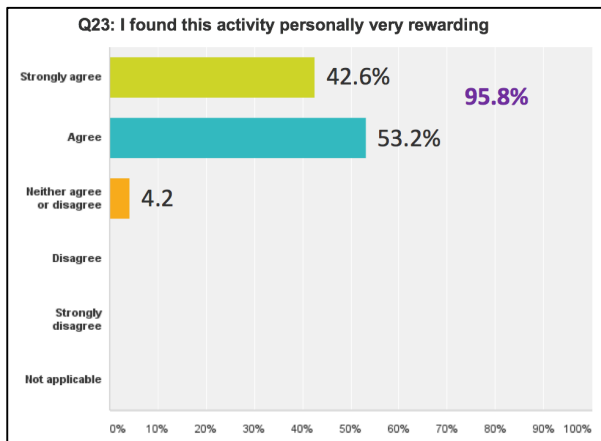


The majority of respondents (61.7%) led the activity for their institution, with the remainder assisting with this activity (these response were contained in Questions 4 and 5).

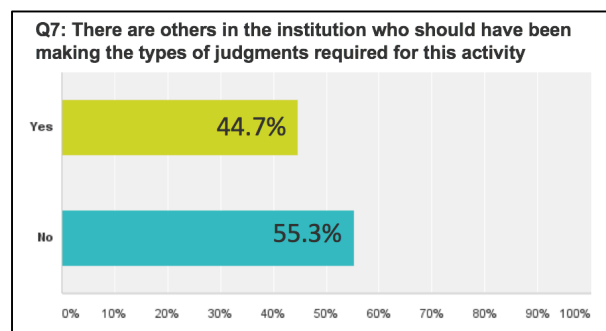
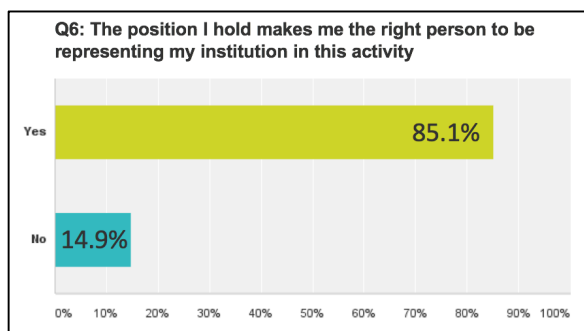
An extremely pleasing result (one of many) was that 72.3% of participants agreed, or strongly agreed that the way the Performance Indicators had been formed within the Benchmarks made what was required clear and unambiguous (Question 11). This certainly continues to justified the work of the review group, who spent quite some time ensuring these indicators flowed well, in 2014.



Unlike the 2014 finding that found that the Benchmarks covered sufficient TEL topics, this year opinion was more split, with a small majority neither agreeing or disagreeing (Question 19). This question was extended further, in Question 22, when asked if the benchmarks went far enough. In this case there was little disagreement, with 68% believing they did go far enough, a result more consistent with 2014.

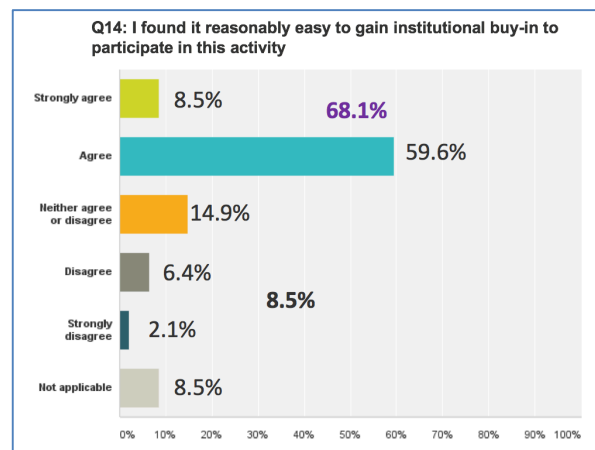
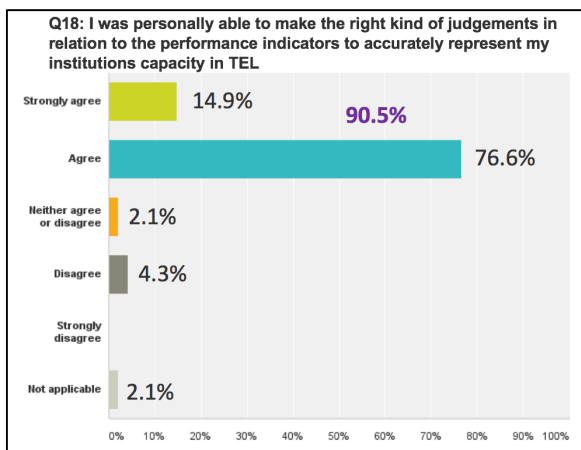
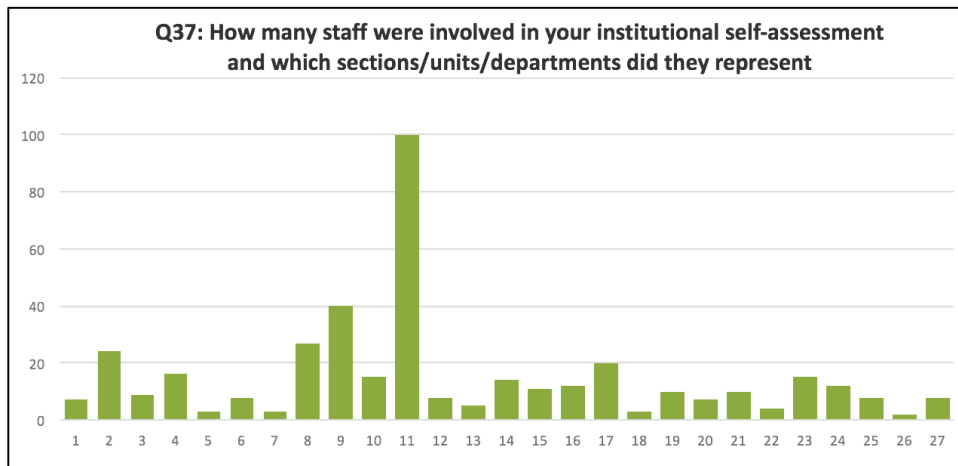


In Q23 it can be seen that 95.8% of the participant had found this activity personally very rewarding. One could suggest this was partly due to the fact that 85.1% had also found that what the other institutions had to share informative enough to make reasonable comparisons with their own institution (Q24). Herein lies the heart and the beauty of this type of activity.

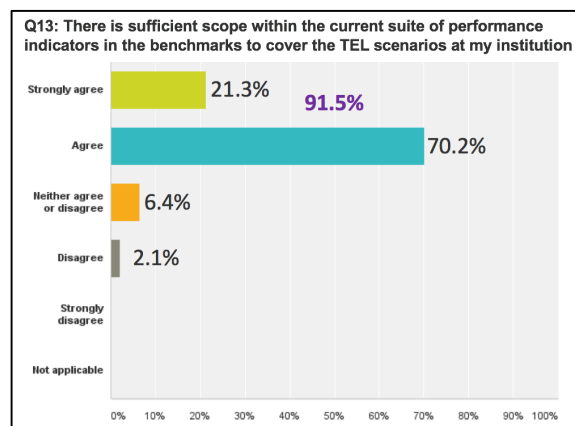
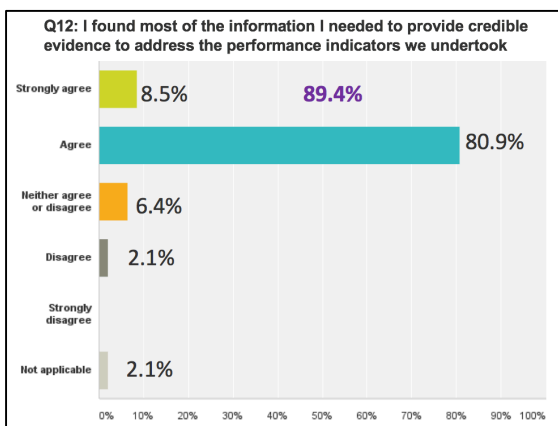


In Q6, 85.1% of the participants agreed that they were the right people to be involved in this type of activity on behalf of their institution. However, it is seen in the responses to Q7 that 44.7% felt that there were others within their institution who could/should have also been involved in this activity. This can also be partly explained, when we look at the responses to Q37 and see that there were 6 institutions who did not consult terribly widely, with 5 or less staff participating in their self-assessment. Encouragingly, in 2014 the

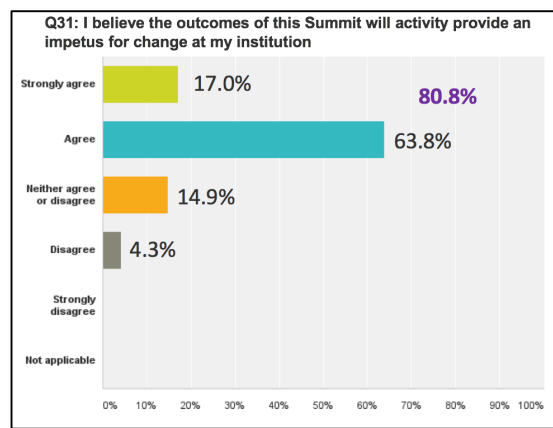
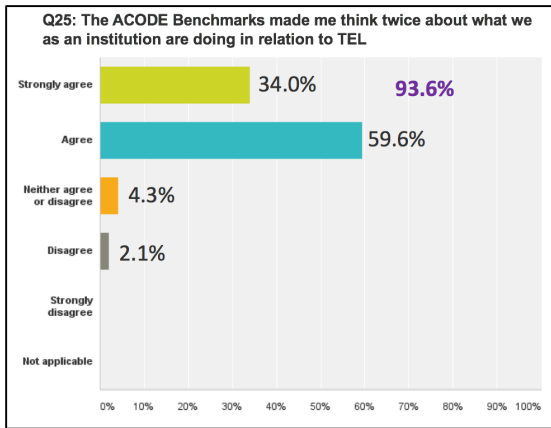
average number of participant per institution was 8, however, this year there was on average 15 participants per institution, with some 401 people participating all-up.



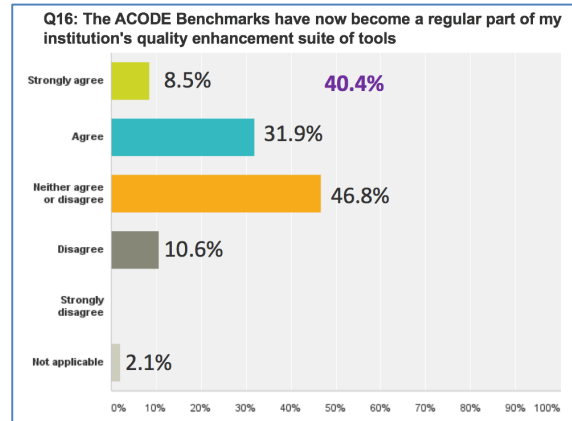
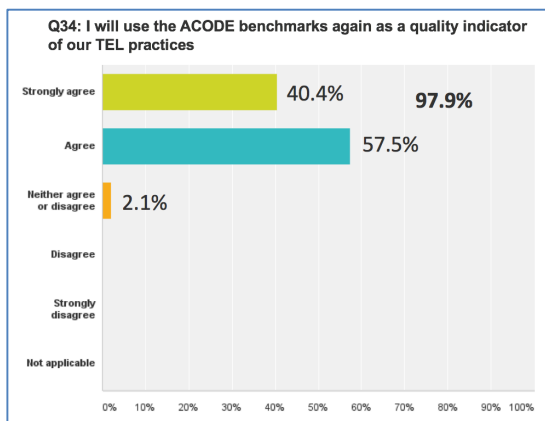
Questions 18 provides a clear indication that the Benchmarking activity target the right types of people, as some 90% agreed, or strongly agreed that they could accurately represent their institution, with just two people disagreeing. Along the same lines, it was seen that the majority (68.1%) of participants believed they had the blessing of their institution to be involved in tis activity, as against 8.5% who did not.



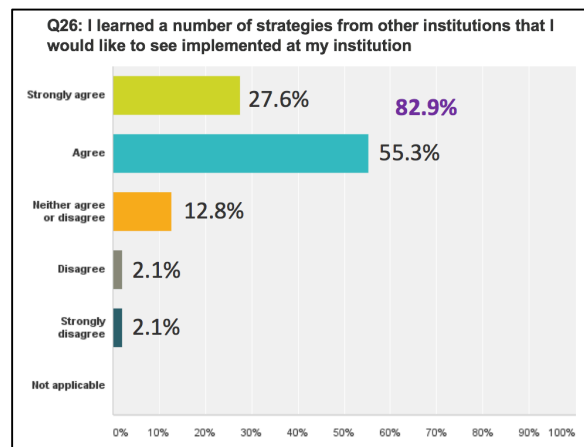
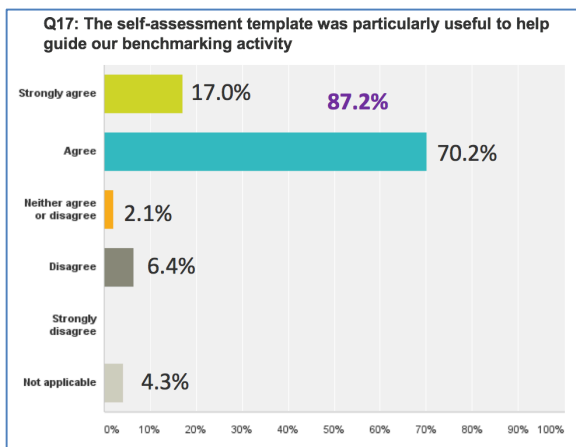
In the majority of cases (89.4%) participants agreed that they were able to source sufficient and credible evidence to support their judgments around the performance indicators (Q12). In 2014 this figure was just 69%. Similarly, 91.5% agreed that there was sufficient scope within the indicators to cover most of their scenarios, again slightly up from 2014. This is a very pleasing result, and speaks to the validity of the tool.



The benchmarks were designed to help institutions critically self-assess their capacity in TEL and Q25 clearly demonstrates that this is precisely what they are doing, with 93.6% of respondents agreeing that they were made to think twice about what their institution was doing in this space. Similarly Q31 provides a clear indication that the benchmarks have prompted some 80.8% of participants to consider some strategic change that could be implemented, based on undertaking this activity.



In question 34 and 16 we see participants clearly wanting to engage with this tool again in the future (97.9%) but that they have not yet become part of the ongoing suite of tools that make up their institutions quality enhancement regime (40.4%).



It was certainly pleasing to see that 87.2% of the participants found the newly formed self-assessment template very useful in undertaking their internal activities (Q17). Partly the reason for this is that participant (some 82.9%) believed they had learned some strategies from others that could be implemented at their institution.

Open ended questions

When participants were asked how they would 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. A general desire to see more staff involved across the institution, such as IT, Library and Student support groups.
2. ACODE provide some more preparatory events and with institutions loading their data earlier
3. Provide some worked examples
4. Do the benchmarks in order.
5. Workshop common recommendations
6. Promote the need for a greater lead time

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.

Next steps

With some minor adjustments (tweaking) the benchmarks do seem to be performing well and are robust as they stand. The job for ACODE is to establish the value proposition that each member institution participate in the biennial benchmarking activity, not so that ACODE can say that all their institutions are involved, but so these institutions are taking full advantages of the affordances the benchmarks offer.

Going forward ACODE has been invited to participate in a Benchmarking Summit in the UK in June 2017, to be facilitated by the Open University, and we look forward to any involvement we may be invited to have in this event.

Recommendations for future iterations of the Benchmarks

The following recommendations are made:

- That over the next few months some minor adjustments be made to the Benchmarks, based on those things identified Evaluation Survey and Version 3.2 be published.

Recommendations for future Benchmarking activities

The following recommendations are made:

- That further tweaks be made to the online tool to make the reporting function easier to use.
- As the activity continues to grow we will need to look at new ways to facilitate the sharing of information during the reporting phase off the activity, to avoid overly protracted sessions.
- The location of the event held at an institution in a major capitol city on the east coast of Australia. For unlike ACODE Workshops, in many cases more than one representative is present. This will help contain travel costs for participants.

My perspective

As the facilitator of the ACODE Benchmarking Summit, both in 2014 and this year, 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 simply by taking the time to self-assess against a set of quality indicators, like those found in the ACode Benchmarks. 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 Canberra has again provided the opportunity for many of us to build stronger relationships and ties 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 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 ACode continuing its commitment to the ongoing use of this tool to help institutions establish the regular use of these Benchmarks as one way of ensuring there is a level of quality in their technology enhanced learning practices.

Associate Professor Michael Sankey
RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia
And ACode Vice-President

Appendix A. ACODE 2nd Inter-Institutional Summit Agenda

Monday, 27 June

- From 4.00 Arrival and registration
5.00 – 8.00 Welcome and scene setting (how it will all work)
 Introductions (each institutional leader to speak for 2 minutes)
 Dinner (generous finger foods)
 Address – Anthony McClaran, Chief Executive Officer
 Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA)
 Panel Session – “Reflecting on the last benchmarking activity: tips and tricks for this time”

Tuesday, 28 June

- 8:00 – 8:30 Arrival tea and coffee – Official welcome and photographs
8:30 – 10:15 Peer review - Benchmark 1
10.15 – 10.30 Short break over Morning Tea
10: 30 – 12.30 Peer review - Benchmark 4
12:30 – 1:15 Lunch
1:15 – 2:45 Peer review - Benchmark 2
2.45 – 3.00 Short break over Afternoon tea
3:00 – 4:15 Peer review - Benchmark 7
4.15 – 5.30 Peer review - Benchmark 8

Wednesday, 29 June

- 8:00 – 8:30 Arrival tea and coffee – Short review of day 1
8:30 – 10:30 Peer review - Benchmark 5
10.30 – 10.45 Short break over Morning Tea
10: 45 – 12.45 Peer review - Benchmark 6
12:45 – 1:30 Lunch
1:30 – 2:45 Peer review - Benchmark 3
2.45 – 3.00 Short break over Afternoon tea
3:00 – 4:00 Discussions/reflections on the Summit
 What comes next
 Evaluation and concluding remarks – President ACODE