ACODE

The Australasian Council for Open and Digital Education

annual report 2024

CONTENTS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that ACODE has made significant strides in advancing technology-enhanced learning. Our commitment to innovation has been evident through key initiatives, including the successful launch of the TEL Awards with increased prize funding. This initiative has recognised and celebrated excellence, highlighting the incredible talent and creativity within our institutions. Additionally, the transition of our online presence has further strengthened our mission to facilitate collaboration and engagement within our community.

A major milestone this year was the introduction of our new website and forum, designed to enhance member interaction and accessibility. While there were some initial challenges, we remain optimistic about future engagement as we continue to refine these platforms. Our ongoing efforts aim to foster deeper connections and discussions among members, ensuring that ACODE remains a hub for innovation and knowledge sharing.

The TEL Awards submissions exemplified the dedication and passion of our members towards enhancing student learning experiences through technology. The breadth of ideas and initiatives showcased underscores our collective commitment to continuous improvement in higher education. Looking ahead, ACODE remains steadfast in its dedication to fostering a supportive environment for professional development, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. We will continue to explore opportunities to enhance our services and engagement strategies to better serve our members and the broader educational community.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all ACODE members for your dedication, contributions, and participation throughout the year. Your enthusiasm and commitment play a vital role in shaping the future of education through technology. Together, let us carry this momentum forward into the coming year, continuing to drive meaningful change and innovation in technology-enhanced learning.

Regards,

Professor Kate Ames
ACODE President

WORKSHOP SERIES

ACODE 91 and ACODE 92

ACODE has continued to foster meaningful discussions and advancements in technology-enhanced learning through a series of insightful workshops. These events have provided valuable opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the exploration of emerging challenges and opportunities in digital education.

The ACODE 91 workshop, hosted by Western Sydney University, centred on preparing for a digitally fluent future. Professor Maryanne Dever set the tone for the day with an insightful welcome, followed by Associate Professor Jason Lodge, who delivered a compelling presentation on the risks of failing to equip educators and students for future-readiness. Patrick Kidd further explored the concept of being "ready" in today's context, offering a thought-provoking perspective on the evolving demands of digital literacy.

The workshop's interactive components, led by hosts Leanne Yard and Lynnae Venaruzzo, encouraged robust discussion. A lively panel and debate engaged participants in addressing the key question: "Should we adopt programmatic approaches to prepare students for the future?" Cherie Diaz also contributed to the discourse, highlighting the role of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) in developing learners' skills. The event fostered meaningful conversations and provided valuable insights into strengthening digital readiness in education.

Continuing this momentum, ACODE 92, hosted by The Australian National University, delved into the evolving nature of learning spaces. This workshop highlighted the challenges and opportunities in designing educational environments that support diverse learning styles and modes of delivery. Key discussions featured innovative projects such as the Canberra Institute of Technology's new building, Murdoch University's Boola Katitjin concept, and Swinburne University's stakeholder-driven design process. Each of these initiatives showcased the critical role of technology in shaping modern learning environments.

A sincere thank you goes to the presenters, in-person and online participants from across Australia and New Zealand, and the ANU team for delivering an inspiring and collaborative event. The exchange of ideas, experiences, and technology insights reinforced the importance of our ACODE network in driving forward-thinking approaches to education.

As we move forward, ACODE remains committed to fostering conversations that enhance digital learning and innovation. We look forward to building on these discussions in the coming year and continuing to strengthen our community of educators and technology leaders.

TEL TALKS

In 2024, ACODE introduced an exciting new initiative in response to ongoing discussions within our member forums. Recognising the need for a fresh and dynamic way to collaborate and engage virtually, we launched TEL Talks—an innovative series of online sessions designed to explore key topics in Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL). These one-hour monthly sessions have quickly gained traction, providing a platform for members to share insights, discuss emerging trends, and exchange best practices in a highly interactive format.

The response to TEL Talks has been overwhelmingly positive, with strong engagement across a range of crucial TEL topics. Over the course of the year, we have hosted discussions on:

Multimodal Learning – 17 guests

Accessibility – 15 guests

Audio and Video Hosting Tools – 22 guests

Collaboration and Communication – 16 guests

Generative AI – 39 guests

Micro-credentials – 16 guests

Portfolios – 76 guests

The variety of topics covered reflects the diverse interests and needs of our community. In particular, the session on Portfolios saw the highest engagement, highlighting a keen interest in digital credentialing and student work showcase strategies. Generative AI also sparked significant discussion, reflecting its growing influence in education and the need for ongoing exploration in this space.

Building on this success, we are eager to continue the momentum into 2025, expanding our reach and inviting more members to participate as hosts. By fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing, TEL Talks will remain a cornerstone of our virtual engagement strategy, ensuring ACODE continues to provide valuable learning and networking opportunities for its members.

We extend our gratitude to all those who attended, contributed, and helped shape these valuable discussions. We look forward to another year of insightful conversations and innovative thinking as we drive forward the future of TEL together.

BENCHMARKING

ACODE Benchmarking 2024

For the first time since 2018 (due to COVID-19), ACODE member institutions were able, once again, to psychically come together to use the new ACODE Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning (2nd Edition) in a two-day intensive at Griffith University in Brisbane. However, this time ACODE had evolved its Benchmarking model, having learned many lessons from the virtual activities of 2020 and 2022, to make it the best of both worlds (face-to-face and virtual) to bring our people together.

The new ACODE Benchmarks for TEL
Over the previous 12 months, a team of ACODE Members reviewed and refreshed the Benchmarks that had served us well since 2014. Those involved included Michael Sankey (lead), Stephen Marshall, Sheila McCarthy, Steve Leichtweis, Ratna Selvaratnam, Nadine Adams, Liane Joubert, & Kate Ames. As part of that work, we also introduced the new Benchmark 9 on TEL Learning Spaces. These Benchmarks may be accessed from: DOI: https://doi.org/10.14742/apubs.2024.725

Benchmark 9
The team that led this specific piece of work included, Liane Joubert (lead), Tim Grace, Michael Sankey, Bill Searle, Stephen Marshall, Ratna Selvaratnam, Nadine Adams, Steve Leichtweis, and Karen Halley.

This new benchmark developed the following Performance Indicators, which where well and truly put through their paces, prior to and during the Benchmarking Summit:

1. Learning spaces as resources enabling the application of TEL in the context of formally scheduled facilities where the physical environment supports formal and informal learning.
2. They provide for individual teaching accommodations that are being maintained, configured and accessible to a wide range of users.
3. Given adequate resourcing, which includes support services that contribute to the successful delivery of L&T, they partner in learning.
4. It's the provisioned resources that distinguish it from broader TEL Services described in Benchmark 4.
5. It is not: Surface features, aesthetic ambience, wider campus environs (conference centres, etc.); domain-specific facilities (libraries, residences, etc.), or virtual learning spaces (Facebook, Minecraft, etc.).

Further reflection on these was then held at the recent ACODE 92 held at ANU in Canberra on November 7.

Lead-up activities to the Benchmarking Summit
With the launch of the 2nd edition of the ACODE Benchmarks for TEL there was significant promotion of these conducted through social media. This included housing these benchmarks on the new ASCILITE Open Journal System (where our White Papers are also held) and promoting them through the ASCILITE network.

In the formal lead-up to the July Benchmarking Summit, a Workshop was held in April for those wishing to participate in the benchmarking activity for the first time, or looking to refresh their understanding of them. This took participants through a potted history of the benchmarks and introduced them to some of the changes that had occurred through the review.

An MS Teams site was established for those who expressed an interest in participating in the 2024 iteration of benchmarking, which provided a forum through which members could engage in conversation around the application of the benchmarks. This site also houses the Benchmarking Tool that was used for institutions to enter their data.

The activity
Twenty Institutions registered their interest in the event. Three of these did not complete their data collection and were thus excluded. One institution completed its data collection but, at the last moment, was not able to attend. This left 11 institutions attending physically and 5 virtually in the Summit activities.

We were pleased to be joined, for the first time by Monash University and TAFE NSW. Of note, TAFE NSW had, for the previous 8 months, been using the Benchmarks for a full internal audit of their processes.

For those institutions who had registered but subsequently not completed the data reporting, all three cited the internal pressures that had prevented them from completing the activity in a timely way but expressed the intention to be involved in the future. Two other pressures prevailed, restricting other institutions from participating. Firstly the pressures created by the advent of generative AI have meant that institutions have had to divert people's resources to develop new strategies and supports, limiting other activities that may not be seen as so urgent. Secondly, many institutions were experiencing tighter than usual budgets, particularly when it came to travel, limiting opportunities for institutions to be involved.

Who did what
Of those who submitted their internal benchmarking activity prior to the event the following table shows which institutions did which benchmark.

Institution	BM1	BM2	BM3	BM4	BM5	BM6	BM7	BM8	BM9
Australian National University		X		X		X		X	X
CQ University		X		X				X	
Charles Darwin University			X	X					X
Deakin University	X	X						X	
Edith Cowan University	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Institute of Health & Mgn't	X	X							
James Cook University	X		X						X
Monash University					X				
TAFE NSW	X	X							
The University of Melbourne		X	X			X	X	X	X
The University of Sydney			X		X	X			X
University of Auckland		X		X	X	X			X
University of Otago	X	X	X	X					
Uni of Western Australia	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Victoria University	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vic University of Wellington	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	9	11	10	8	8	9	4	6	11

Surprisingly, as opposed to previous iterations of this benchmarking activity, the most popular Benchmark, apart from the new one of course, was Benchmark 2 'Planning for institution-wide quality improvement of technology enhanced learning'.

TEL AWARDS

In the 2025 TEL Awards, we proudly awarded a total prize pool of $10,000, with a runner-up prize of $2,000. The competition saw five outstanding applications:
•   Bento Box – Monash University
•   Passport to Maths – Monash College
•   Enhancing Student Learning Through Technology – University of Auckland
•   Cogniti – University of Sydney
•   Advancements and Impact in Technology Enhanced Learning – Western Pacific University

The judging panel, composed of experts from several institutions, faced a challenging task given the high quality and innovative nature of the submissions. After careful deliberation, Cogniti from the University of Sydney was named the winner, while Passport to Maths from Monash College received the Highly Commended award.

Cogniti is an AI-driven platform designed to enhance learning by providing personalized, real-time feedback. It has been adopted by 58 institutions globally and has demonstrated significant improvements in student success. Its user-friendly interface and open-source codebase have made it a valuable tool for educators and students alike. Feedback from both students and faculty has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the platform's ability to foster deeper learning through personalized AI agents. As Cogniti continues to grow, its scalability and sustainability ensure its long-term impact in the education sector.

Passport to Maths focuses on improving numeracy skills and student retention. This initiative has received praise for its targeted support and personalized learning pathways, leading to noticeable improvements in academic performance. Despite ongoing evaluations around its long-term impact, the program's success in enhancing mathematics learning earned it the Highly Commended recognition. Its modular, scalable design promises potential for broader adoption in the future.

We congratulate all participants for their innovative contributions and look forward to further advancing excellence in technology-enhanced learning.

ACODE 2024 EXECUTIVE

The ACODE Executive comprises the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Executive Officer and three Executive Members, each with a two-year term of office beginning from 1 January. No officer serves more than two consecutive terms in the same position and terms are staggered where possible.

Professor Kate Ames
President

Dr Steve Leichtweis
Vice President

Travis Cox
Executive Member

Sheila McCartney
Executive Member

Patrick Stoddart
Executive Member

Professor Michael Sankey
Executive Member

Zoe Allen
Executive Officer

Lynnae Vennaruzzo
Executive Member

Ratna Selvaratnam
Treasurer

INCOME AND EXPENSES

INCOME

Memberships Income - 140,000.00
LTLI Income - 100,000.00

Allocation:
The LTLI income is an approximate figured based on previous years and is designated to cover specific expenses related to the upcoming event. This funding is crucial for the successful execution of the event and will be allocated as follows:
• **Venue Costs:** A portion of the LTLI income will be directed towards securing and maintaining the event venue, including rental fees, utilities, and setup costs.
• **Event Logistics:** Funds will also cover expenses related to event coordination, such as staffing, transportation, and technical support.
• **Marketing and Promotion:** Part of the income will be invested in promoting the event to ensure strong attendance, including advertising, online marketing, and printed materials.
• **Director fees and support staff:** This funding will support fees for our LTLI director, support staff, the panel and any presenters that will be part of the event.
• **Miscellaneous Expenses:** Any remaining LTLI income will be used to address unforeseen costs or contingencies that may arise as part of the event planning process.

By carefully allocating the LTLI income across these categories, we ensure that all necessary aspects of the event are well-funded, leading to a smooth and successful event experience.

EXPENSES

Workshops and Events
Expenses related to various workshops and events include costs for ACODE93 and ACODE94 workshops, the LTLI event, Benchmarking activities, and attendance at key conferences such as the ICDE World Conference and THETA Attendance. These funds cover venue, logistics, and participation fees.

Total Workshops and Events Expenses will include all costs associated with these activities.
•   ACODE93 17,500.00
•   ACODE94 17,500.00
•   LTLI 100,000.00
•   ICDE World Conference Attendance 13,500.00
•   THETA Attendance 13,500.00

Total workshops and Events 162,000.00

General Expenses

General operational expenses encompass a wide range of costs essential for day-to-day operations, including office supplies, utilities, and other administrative expenditures. Total General Expenses reflects the overall expenditure for these operations.

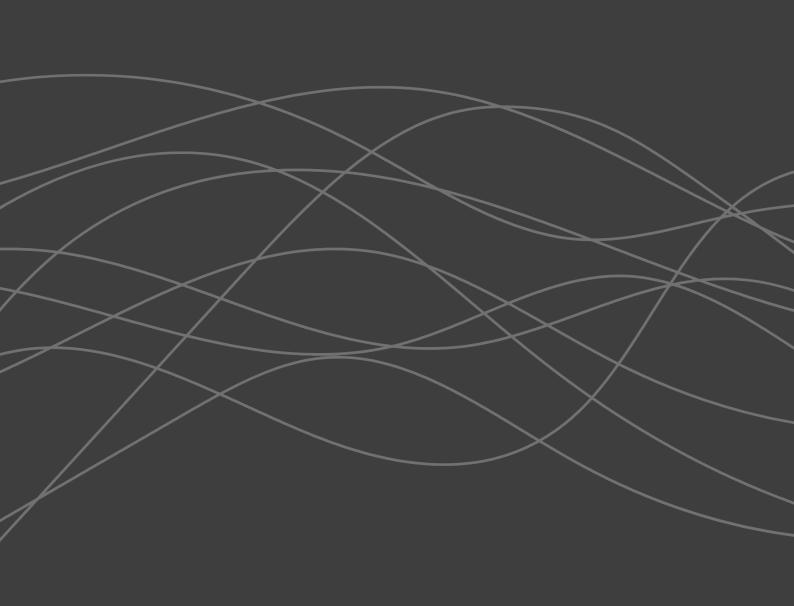Total General Expenses 13,238.99

Payroll Expenses

These expenses cover Wages & Salaries, ensuring fair compensation for staff and personnel working on the events and operations. This figure includes the executive officer role, and the casual ongoing website support.

- Total Payroll Expenses represents the full cost of employee remuneration.
- Wages & Salaries Expenses 95,000.00
- Total Payroll Expenses 95,000.00
- Insurance Expenses
- Total Insurance Expenses 2,609.09
- Total Expenses 272,848.08
- Operating Profit (18,869.93)

CONCLUSION

ACODE members have consistently expressed their sincere appreciation for the effort and dedication invested in organising our events, workshops, and benchmarking activities. Participants were particularly grateful to the institutions involved, whose contributions helped make these initiatives both memorable and highly beneficial.

Looking ahead, it is anticipated that as institutions adapt to the evolving landscape of Generative AI, and as its impact stabilizes, there will be renewed focus on evaluating and enhancing Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) practices. This shift will be critical to advancing the quality agenda that remains essential in the field.