

UECA Benchmarking

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UECA

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About UECA

- Established over 25 years ago
- Represents the English language centres of Australian universities
- A members' organisation (31 members)
- Led and managed by Committee; 8 members from 8 institutions
- Our members make university education accessible for tens of thousands of international students through English language and pathway programs

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UECA Benchmarking and Peer review Overview

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Benchmarking definitions

- Benchmarking is a means of comparing an institution's performance or standards, or both, with those of its peers.
- External referencing ... not only concerns benchmarking program design and methods of assessment, but also student achievement of learning outcomes through student cohort performance analysis and peer review of assessment, including calibration of different markers' grading (Roche, T. & Booth, S., 2021).

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Aims and Motivations

- The ELICOS Standard P4.1c (ii) requires all programs to have formal mechanisms “to ensure that assessment outcomes are comparable to other criteria used for admission to the tertiary education program of study, or for admission to other similar programs of study” (2018).
- With academic standards in place, students should be able to achieve comparable learning outcomes across HE institutions (Roche, T. & Booth, S., 2021).

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Aims and Motivations

- External referencing and benchmarking of assessment standards, policies, and processes across UECA members.
- Focused on written assessment standards within ELICOS Direct Entry programs - Externally peer review assessment and student work samples in Direct Entry courses to compare achievement standards
- Develop institutional and sector-wide national actions and share good practice with other institutions

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UECA Peer Review Round 2

- The UECA Peer Review benchmarking initiative will return, commencing late 2025 and running through 2026.
- An additional focus on policies and practices regarding the intersection of writing assessment and GenAI
- UECA members invited to get involved from October 2025 onwards

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Participation

- A fee of \$1,000 per participating institution applies.
- Work involved is estimated at a day of teaching release a week for a period of 6 months
- Most UECA members have already confirmed participation in the project
- Information sessions will be held at UECA forums as well as via updates on the UECA website
- We are also seeking a paid Project Officer to join us. Experienced ELICOS professional with admin and IT skills.

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Project Phases

Refine Project Scope and Processes

Benchmarking of Direct Entry Program Unit/Subject

5: Final Review

July–Oct. 2025

Nov.–Mar. 2026

Apr.–July 2026

Aug.–Sep. 2026

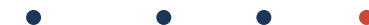
Oct.–Dec. 2026

Review of Assessment Policy and Process

Review, Reflection and Consolidation

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Project Details

Review of Assessment Policies and Processes via **Survey tool**

- KPI#1: Embedding ELICOS Standards across English Language Centres and Courses
- KPI#2: Monitoring and Tracking for Continual Improvement in Direct Entry Programs

Benchmarking of Direct Entry Program Unit/Subject – **Peer review process**

- KPI#3: Calibration of assessment and student work samples across English Language Centres and courses

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Methodology for KPI #1 & #2

Review of Assessment Policies and Processes

- Your Context Statement
- Self-Review KPI#1 and KPI#2 via survey
- Respond to KPM questions related to each KPI
- Respond to each question with a discrete item response (Yes, Yes but, No, No but) followed by a justification provided in a text field to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

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Methodology for KPI #3

Benchmarking of Direct Entry Program Unit/Subject

- Peer Review KPI#3: Calibration of assessment and student work samples across English Language Centres and courses
- Ethics, MOU and NDAs
- A shared secure portal hosted by UECA
- Centres submit review documentation including unit, assessment task sheets and rubrics, **as well as samples of student work at nominated proficiency levels.**
- These are reviewed at two institutions by a pair of assessors using consensus moderation as described in The UECA National Guidance Document for External Referencing of ELICOS Direct Entry Program Standards (2018-2019) (See Appendix A; Sadler 2013).
- Samples are reviewed against a rubric based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR; CoE 2018) as a validated external point of reference.

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The Key Performance Indicators and measures

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Example KPMs for KPI#1

KPI #1: English Standards across direct-entry (DE) English Pathway Programs

KPM1.1: What internal processes and policies are in place for moderating assessment in DE Programs? Are these effective?

KPM1.2: What external reference points are used to validate assessment in DE Programs? Are these effective?

KPM1.3: What formative and summative assessment tasks are used in DE Programs, and how do these assessments map against the stated learning outcomes? Are these effective?

KPM1.4: “What adaptations have been implemented in assessment design, delivery, and moderation within DE Programs to address the challenges and opportunities presented by Generative AI. Have these adaptations effectively maintained validity, reliability, and fairness?”

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Example KPMs for KPI#3

KPI#3: Calibration of assessment and student work samples across English Language Centres and courses

- Are the Unit Learning Outcomes (ULOs) clearly specified, appropriate and aligned with Program Level Outcome (PLOs)?
- Are the Unit Learning Outcomes appropriate at the Grade/Exit levels (as benchmarked against the appropriate CEFR levels)?
- Does the assessment task/s design enable students to demonstrate attainment of the relevant ULO's and relevant PLO's?
- Are assessment tasks aligned with ULOs and PLOs in ways that actively address the challenges and realities of Generative AI?"
- Using the task rubric provided, do you agree that the grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment?
- Using the CEFR rubric, do you agree that the grades awarded reflect the levels in the CEFR?

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Reminder of Benefits

- Supports compliance with TEQSA requirements for demonstrating rigorous and comparable assessment standards.
- Offers institutional benchmarking against national standards.
- Enables peer learning and sharing of good practices across institutions.
- Contributes to the development of national recommendations for assessment reform in the face of Gen AI
- Participating institutions will receive a published report with findings and recommendations.

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