

T R I B A L

Benchmarking: Helping universities improve performance and student outcomes



“The Tribal Benchmarking data has quickly become integral to informing our budget planning process. Allied to greater sophistication in our income generation modelling, it has provided an objective ‘voice’ in demonstrating where we should be investing more and similarly, highlighting areas where we could be more lean.”

JOEL ARBER, PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR (EXTERNAL RELATIONS),
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE



Tribal Benchmarking in Universities

For 25 years, Tribal has been helping universities worldwide to improve financial performance while improving student outcomes.

THREE REASONS UNIVERSITIES INVEST IN TRIBAL BENCHMARKING TO SOLVE THEIR BIGGEST PLANNING CHALLENGES:

1

TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

See how the university is performing against sector-wide benchmarks, using the most accurate and longest-established benchmarking service in Higher Education.

2

TO DRIVE CHANGE

Identify potential savings or opportunities for reinvestment typically equivalent to 3% of turnover – and use the benchmarking report to drive change

3

FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Embed benchmarking as part of a continuous improvement process; two thirds of our clients use Tribal Benchmarking regularly.

A proven approach: ensuring your data is current and relevant to economic conditions

Each university is different, but they face common challenges. There is a need to do “more with less”, and to allocate resources with REF and TEF scores in mind. Benchmarking helps university leaders make informed investment decisions to thrive in a global marketplace. Use Tribal Benchmarking to gain the strategic insight that helps you drive organisational improvement, improve the student experience, and improve student success.

Our Benchmarking approach has proven successful time and time again, in whichever country we work, and with any size of university. Our experienced consultants work together with you, on-site, throughout the data validation process. By involving key stakeholders from across the university, we promote ownership of the analysis. This approach guarantees that issues around data consistency, definition and appropriate level of granularity are resolved immediately. Consequently, the results

can be used effectively to set performance targets and drive improvement.

We look at teaching, research and professional services, highlighting areas for investment alongside potential efficiency savings. Multiple comparative benchmarks provide efficiency measures and aspirational development targets. To compare your university “like for like” with the other universities in our databank, we categorise data using our “function driven” model. The model overcomes different organisational structures, meaning that the comparative data can be trusted.

Benchmarking results are delivered as a comprehensive online report. Our consultants present detailed feedback tailored to suit executive management, wider management or governors. This approach ensures report findings are correctly interpreted and fully understood, gaining the maximum value for your management teams and your university.

Shape your cost base to improve student outcomes

Identify specific investment needs

Identify immediate financial savings and medium to long-term cost reduction opportunities

Multiple benchmarks - see how your university compares to best practice, and to universities with similar characteristics (e.g. size, multi-site, student profile, course offer)

Monitor growth or cost reduction plans

Assess the quality of Professional Services relative to the investment in each area

Review your understanding of teaching and research at whole university level and at faculty level

“The Tribal staff involved in the project were universally excellent and very adept at dealing effectively with University staff from all contexts and at all levels.”

DAVID MUCKERSIE, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE PLANNING AND DEPUTY REGISTRAR, UNIVERSITY OF YORK

View your Benchmarking results online

Now, Benchmarking results are available online, making it easier to interpret and understand the results.

The online results portal means you can choose different benchmarks, and interrogate the base data more easily than ever before. Our clients are saying that it really does “bring the data to life”.



“It was great to work with David and Brian, their knowledge and insight made the process easier and helped to ensure engagement throughout the institution.”

**BECKY JONES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF FINANCE,
CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY**

“Tribal has been easy to deal with from the start. They listened to our concerns and have worked to ensure they were alleviated in the work they did. Their expertise in the way in which the University business works has grown and they are now able to add considerable value by the analysis they are performing. They have worked to collect data with a minimal impact on our business and use technology to do so. Results are now becoming more accessible with their new web portal to the sector.”

**KEITH LONGDEN, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY, NEW ZEALAND**



Benchmarking as part of a continuous improvement journey

Benchmarking has the greatest impact when it is part of a culture of continuous self-assessment and performance improvement, rather than a one-time event.

Benchmarking should be included in the performance management information available to your leadership team – it's a vital tool in your management kit-bag and provides high level performance indicators that are suitable to be shared in a **governance** and **board** context.

Benchmarks of relative performance are useful and objective ways of ensuring your organisation keeps on track with its **strategic plans**.

The indicators also help to provide **assurance to stakeholders** – management is doing the right things!

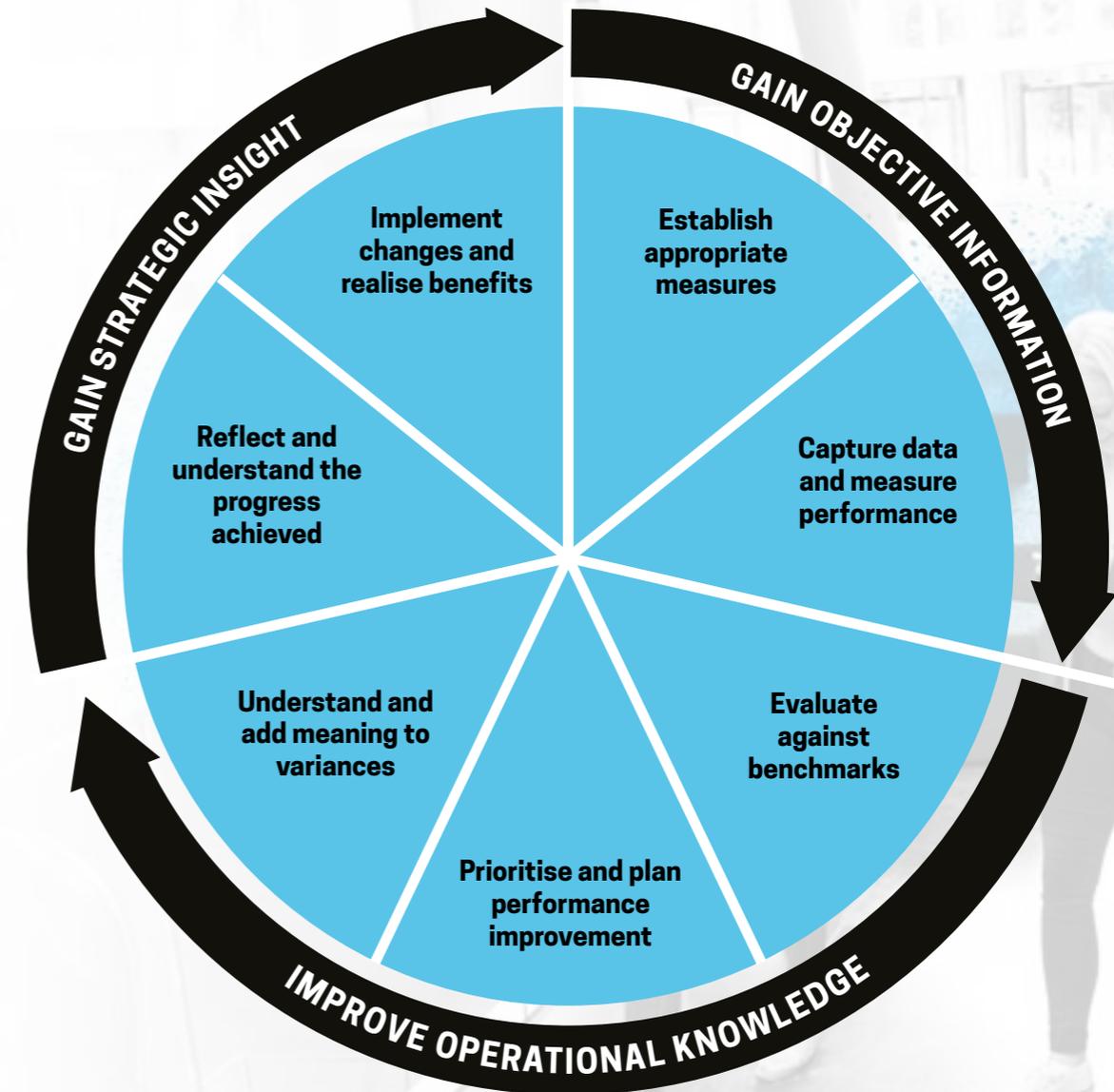
The Hackett Group's research into business benchmarking has found that world-class organisations share several common characteristics, namely:

Self-evaluation is part of the organisational DNA.

Continuous improvement is simply part of the way an organisation does business, it is not a discrete one-off initiative.

They utilise a continuous **performance measurement** system – of which benchmarking is an integral part – to identify opportunities, quantify benefits and confirm progress.

They seek to achieve **improvement**.



Benchmarking – a catalyst for improvement

Benchmarking should be the objective ‘stake in the ground’ and help you measure your distance travelled as you implement your improvement plans. For all good leadership teams it can be the catalyst for improvement, and it begins to change the culture of the organisation because of the behaviours it drives.

Self-assess performance – provides an opportunity for self-reflection.

Compare with other universities – assess the reasons for any differences.

Encourage discovery of new ideas through a strategic look inside or outside your university – if the external comparison is right, and there’s a difference, should you be changing what you do, and where do you invest to close the performance gap?

Obtain data to support decision making – identify the size of the performance gap.

Set effective targets for improvement – through informing the budgeting process, targeting specific areas for investment in an attempt to achieve improvement.

Strengthen strategy formulation and implementation – from the above actions.

“I found the process and methodology adopted very robust and the findings presented very well at both summary and detailed level. The team were professional and knowledgeable on all aspects of the key findings. Having worked at Ulster for a long period of time, while many of the findings were not a surprise there were still findings which I had not anticipated. True value will be derived from a subsequent review by Tribal post reorganisation.”

PETER HOPE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, ULSTER UNIVERSITY





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Move your university forward with confidence

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Tribal empowers the world of education, providing the expertise, software and services required by education and business organisations worldwide to underpin student success.