



AUIDF Benchmarking 2015 in 2016

from analysis to action

Australian Universities International Directors' Forum

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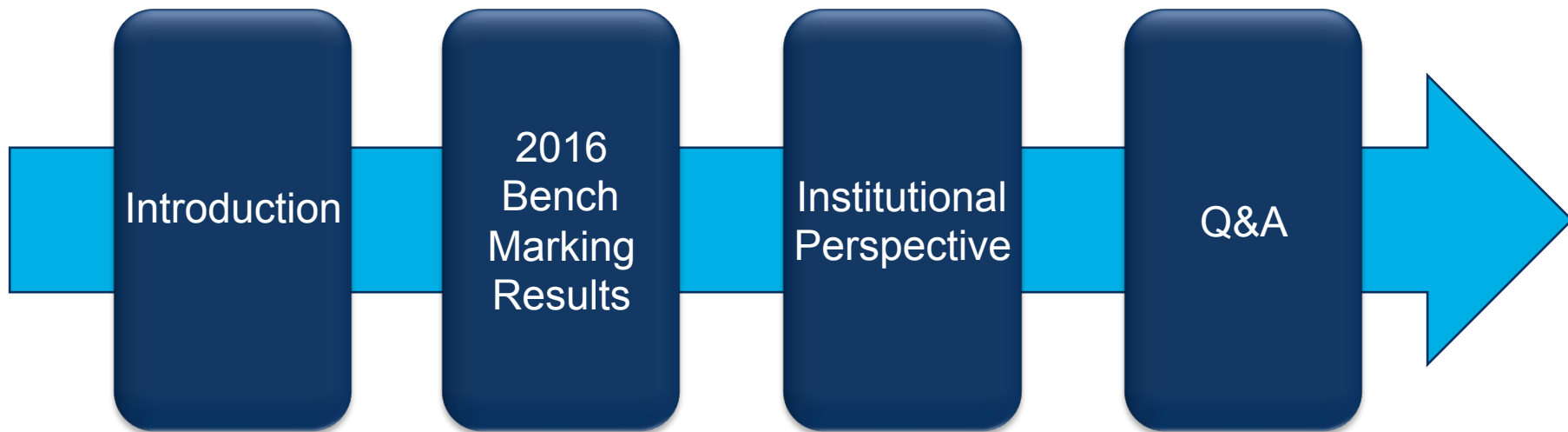
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Overview



AUIDF annual benchmarking studies

1 – IO Benchmarking: universities’ international operations across a number of indices including cost of international operations, staffing, support services, recruitment costs.

2 - Data Collection: collation of data provided by universities on international students onshore and offshore.

3 - Learning Abroad: data on outgoing international learning mobility, focusing on the international study experiences of students at Australian universities, all levels of study.

4 - Public Domain: data from publicly available sources, including enrolment numbers, revenue, academic performance, retention.

Process overview – IO Benchmarking

- **The IO Benchmarking study** focuses on a range of aspects of the international operations of Australian universities during the calendar year **2015**.
- AUIDF members were invited to feedback from early April to the end of May 2016. **xx universities responded to the study and reported xx,xxx commencing international students in 2015.**
- Reporting focusses on university-specific results compared against national and group benchmarks.
- Reporting remains confidential and customised to each university.
- All parts of the study were optional for universities. In this report, only universities that responded to particular components are included in the analysis.
- A feature of the data collection for benchmarking continues to be the need for consistent definition and that universities commit the resources to answer questions. That aside, while the number of universities responding to each question varies, **the data set provides an effective national picture.**

Process overview - Scope

IO Benchmarking covers 7 core functions of the international operations of Australian universities:

1. The functions and structures of International Offices
2. The staffing of marketing, enquiries, admissions and compliance
3. Admissions policies, procedures, turnaround times and quotas
4. International student services
5. Costs of recruiting for key source countries
6. Conversion rates from applicants to offers to commencements
7. The cost of international operations

Also

Accommodation provided by universities for international students.

The first national benchmarking studies

2002 in 2003

29 universities - 5 core functions benchmarked:

1. Costs of international offices (% of onshore international student revenue)
2. Staffing of admissions
3. Costs of recruiting for key overseas source countries
4. Conversion rates from applicants to offers to commencements
5. Structure of international offices

2003 in 2004

34 universities – 3 more functions added

6. Admissions policies, procedures and quotas
7. International student services
8. International student mobility

- 1. IO functions/
structures**
- 2. Staffing**
- 3. Admissions policies,
procedures,
turnaround times,
quotas**
- 4. Int student services**
- 5. Cost of recruiting for
key source countries**
- 6. Conversion rates**
- 7. Cost of int operations**
- 8. Accommodation**

2016

2003

2004

1. IO functions/
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2. Staffing
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2016

2003

2004

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Time series

2014 report to institutions

1. International Office costs
2. Staffing of marketing, enquiries, admissions and compliance
3. International student services
4. International student mobility
5. Costs of recruiting for key source countries
6. Conversion rates from applicants to offers to commencements

Answering the questions

13 of 34 participants in the **2003** benchmarking study were unable to report costs by key source country

Only half the universities participating in the **2003** benchmarking exercise were able to report on recruitment channels for international students

In 2016:

31 of 33 universities reported data on recruitment channels

33 of 33 universities reported % recruited via agents

24 of 33 universities reported conversion rates for onshore students

32 of 33 universities reported conversion rates for offshore students

28 of 33 universities reported pathways data

In 2004 for the first time a university reported on how it used benchmarking data



Headline results

Headline results 1

- In total, xx universities reported spending a total of \$xx million on international student recruitment in 2015. This is up from \$xx million in 2014
- International student fee income was reported by xx universities at \$xx billion. This is up from \$xx billion in 2014.
- On average, universities spent xx% of fee income on international student recruitment, excluding staffing. (xx% in 2014)
- The average recruitment cost was \$xx per commencement across participating universities. (\$xx per commencement in 2014)
- The average spend on staffing (both centralised and devolved) was \$xx per commencement. (\$xx per commencement in 2014)
- Participating universities reported xxx,xxx applicants, xxx,xxx people offered places and xx,xxx commencements across all study levels and source countries.

Headline results 2

- Recruitment costs YoY almost the same on average per institution
- International student fee income YoY up xx%
- % of fee income spent on international student recruitment YoY almost the same
- Average recruitment cost up xx%
- Average spend on staffing (both centralised and devolved) up xx%
- xx% of commencements applied through an agent.
- Average conversion rate from applicants to commencements across Australia was xx% across all study levels and source countries, down from xx% in 2014. **The historical figure of x in x applicants converting to commencements is now solidly x in x.**



Recruitment costs



Staffing costs



International Student Services



Conversions: Applicants, offers, commencements

COMMENCEMENTS



Admissions policies, procedures and quotas



International office structures



Topic of interest: Accommodation



International Office use of benchmarking data



**Now -
Gabrielle Rolan
UniSA**



Then

How were benchmarking results used?

Operational Issues

Staffing of student services and education abroad functions

Development of KPIs such as improved conversion rates

Delegation of admissions decisions

Increases in the marketing budget

Strategic Planning

Recruitment channels: targeting high conversion/ low cost cohorts

Direct marketing and e-recruitment initiatives

Diverting expenditure from high to low cost countries, from high to low cost activities

Shift focus from generating applications to converting offers

How were benchmarking results used?

Information Sharing

New initiatives such as enquiry management systems or introduction of application fees

International Office efficiencies (e.g. cost of an international office)

Internal PR – highlight achievements (e.g. conversion rates)

The fact that the International Office participates in such a study often impresses

Contact details

- For further information about the AUIDF Benchmarking, please contact Stephen Connelly (Stephen.Connelly@i-graduate.org)
- For further details of any of our other research services, please contact a member of the i-graduate Research Team (info@i-graduate.org)
- Where we work:

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

ASIA

NORTH AMERICA

UK & EUROPE