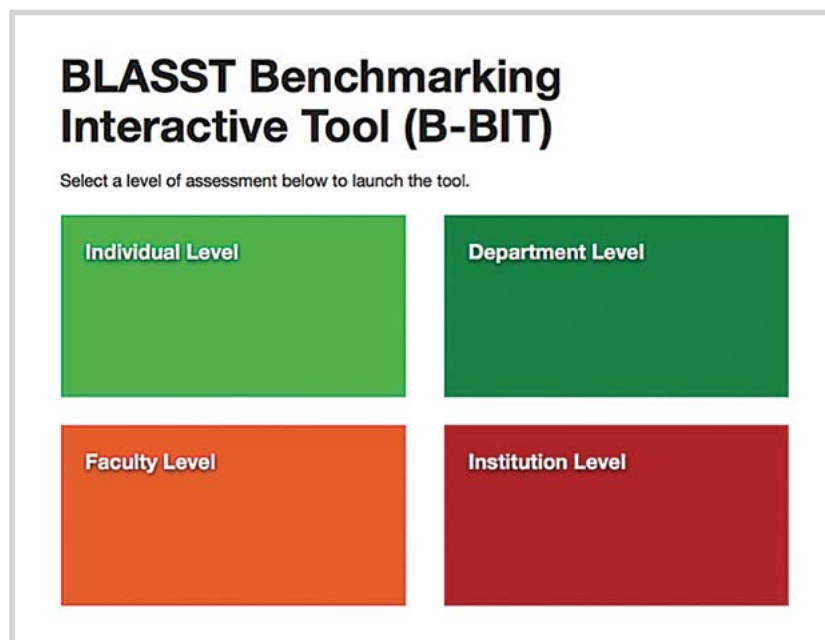


## Benchmarking using the BLASST Sessional Staff Standards Framework

Benchmarking means making and using “well-chosen and well-structured comparisons with other relevant institutions and organisations”<sup>3</sup> to identify areas that need improvement. It involves “questioning how processes are performed, seeking out best practices, and implementing new models of operation.”<sup>4</sup>

### How do I benchmark with the BLASST Framework?

You can benchmark with the Framework using the BLASST Benchmarking Interactive Tool (B-BIT) available at [www.blasst.edu.au](http://www.blasst.edu.au).



Using B-BIT, institutions and individuals can:

- Select an organisational level of engagement with the Framework (from individual Sessional Staff member to whole-of-institution)
- Benchmark against the national evidenced-based Sessional Staff standards
- Automatically generate a colour-coded summary report which can be downloaded and saved to file or printed
- Develop an action plan with strategies to guide quality enhancement towards good practice
- Engage in repeat benchmarking cycles
- Learn about standards of Good Practice.

<sup>3</sup>Stella, A., & Woodhouse, D. (2007). Benchmarking in Australian higher education: A thematic analysis of AUQA audit reports. Australian Universities Quality Agency, 5

<sup>4</sup>ibid. 6.

Benchmarking with the BLASST Framework can be carried out:

- Independently - benchmarking by individuals as a (self-)evaluation process, and using any of the institutional, department, faculty and individual levels
- Collaboratively - benchmarking by and across groups within institutions, departments, faculties, and individual Sessional Staff to gather different perspectives
- Cross-institutionally – at an institutional level or between departments, faculties and Sessional Staff at different universities
- Externally – in collaboration with other individuals, departments, faculties and organisations.

## Selecting a benchmarking level

You select which level of the Framework you wish to work through by thinking about what you want to achieve and at what organisational level:



### ***You will want to work at the Institutional level if:***

you want to benchmark at a whole-of-institution level and your focus includes the role and contribution of Sessional Staff to the University or institution

and/or

you wish to obtain benchmarking data on Sessional Staff standards in your university or institution.

Those working in Human Resources, University Executive, Senior Management or as professional and academic leaders and managers will find this level useful.

### ***You will want to work at the Faculty level if:***

you are working in or with a Faculty and have responsibility for the management, support, recruitment, administration or professional development of Sessional Staff within that faculty

and/or

you wish to obtain benchmarking data on Sessional Staff standards in your faculty.

*This may also be referred to as School or Division or College level.*

### ***You will want to work at the Department level if:***

you are working in or with a department and have responsibility for the management, support, recruitment, administration or professional development of Sessional Staff

and/or

you wish to obtain benchmarking data on Sessional Staff standards in your department.

*This level may also be relevant to Unit Convenors, Subject Coordinators, Program Leaders or Directors, Research Centres.*



### ***You will want to work at the Individual Sessional Staff member level if:***

you are a Sessional Staff member at a University or other higher education institution

and/or

you wish to self-evaluate against the Sessional Staff standards.

## The BLASST Benchmarking Interactive Tool (B-BIT)

B-BIT is an online self-assessment and evaluative tool that is essentially an online, interactive version of the BLASST Sessional Staff Standards Framework.

B-BIT allows you to benchmark against the Sessional Staff Standards via any one of the four organisational levels.

Refer to the section on **How to use the Framework** to learn how to select an appropriate level.

### BLASST Benchmarking Interactive Tool (B-BIT)

Select a level of assessment below to launch the tool.



#### ***Before you start benchmarking , please note :***



**You will not be able to save your work until a summary report is generated.**

To protect and maintain individual and institutional privacy and confidentiality, BBIT DOES NOT retain the responses and information you enter **beyond the login screen.**

For this reason, we advise:

- minimal interruptions while you are working through BBIT
- leaving your browser window open on BBIT if you are interrupted
- saving your Summary Report, whether in html format or as a PDF

There is a **Save** button at the bottom of each B-BIT window which saves the current page.



**Time is required to complete the benchmarking process.** We suggest allowing at least two hours to complete individual benchmarking with B-BIT, and allowing a day for multi-level benchmarking with a group (refer to the section on Holding a BLASST Benchmarking Workshop).



**Summary report:** On completion of the exercise, a benchmarking Summary Report (PDF) will be generated to save, file or print for your reference.

**We strongly recommend saving your Summary Report for your future reference in a secure location, whether online or in hard-copy form.**

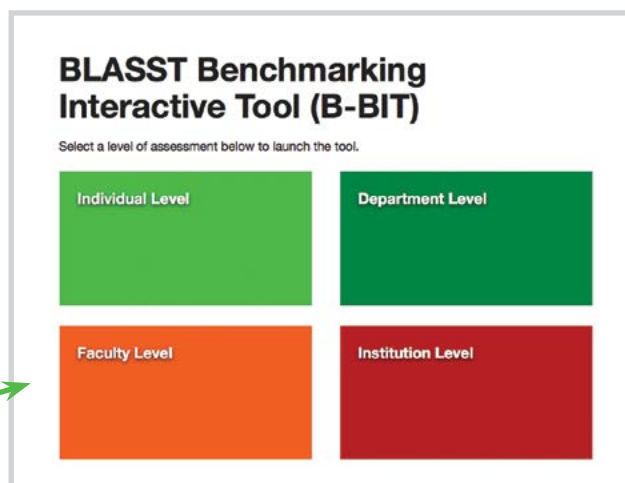
**B-BIT DOES NOT retain information entered beyond the login screen.**

Now, go to <http://blasst.edu.au/benchmarking.html> to begin benchmarking

## Benchmarking with B-BIT

Please note: you can preview the Framework at any time by downloading it from the BLASST website

<http://blasst.edu.au/framework.html>



1. Click on a coloured box to start benchmarking at that level

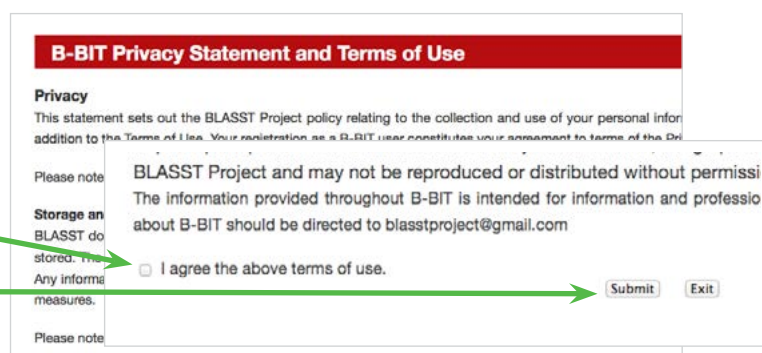


To protect user privacy, all the information you enter after you log in is **not stored or saved in B-BIT**. At the end of the process, you will receive a summary report which collates all the data you have entered, which can be saved as a PDF file.

**Remember** You are responsible for downloading, saving and filing this report.

2. Read and tick the box if you agree to the B-BIT terms of use

Click **Submit** or **Exit**



The Welcome page tells you:

- The selected organisational level
- The three Key Principles
- How to complete benchmarking

### Welcome - Faculty-level Benchmarking

This Framework is designed to stimulate reflection and action, and to work towards consistency in good practice with regard to Sessions can be used to inform practices and priorities.

### Principles

Three guiding principles underpin the Framework:

- Quality Learning and Teaching
- Support for Sessional Staff
- Sustainability

### How to Complete the Benchmarking Exercise

You have selected **Faculty level benchmarking**; that is, you will be responsible to your Faculty.

You haven't logged in

## Getting Started - Department level

You have selected to answer **Department level** questions, please provide information related to the Department.


<b>Department Name:</b>	<input type="text" value="Coffee"/>
<b>Institution:</b>	<input type="text" value="University of Australasia"/>

[Submit](#)

Before you start to answer questions, you have to **Login**

Not have an account yet? [click to create one](#)

3. Before you begin benchmarking, you need to login OR create a new account.



Benchmarking leadership and advancement of standards for sessional teaching

You are here: [BLASST home](#) > [Build new account](#)

## New account

**Title**



**First Name**

**Last Name**

**Your Position Type**

**Your Faculty or Office**

**Your Institution**

**Remember to save as you go.**

To protect user privacy, all the information you enter from this point is **not stored or saved until the summary report is generated.** You may then save the Summary Report as a PDF file.

My Profile Logout

## Principle One: Quality of Learning and Teaching

The University is committed to consistently high quality learning and teaching for all of its students, regardless of the employment status of the staff member teaching them. It aims to ensure that the learning and teaching approaches adopted across the University match or exceed good practice; that learning and teaching values, principles and priorities are applied to sessional staff; and that sessional staff are included in University communities of practice.

In order to ensure sessional staff have the ability to attain Quality Teaching Standards, the University recognises that appropriate professional development must be provided for sessional staff.

### Consider these criteria relating to Principle One

**1. The institution articulates the employment and educational skills required from a sessional staff member.**

Please click in the box below to select the set of statements which best applies to your Institution:

i. A statement from the institution about skills required is included in the Enterprise Agreement. A generic position description is in place and available, which lists skills required, including teaching expertise, qualifications, and/or experience. Guidelines are provided for what should be included in job advertisements, including on the University website.

ii. Minimum qualifications are detailed; i.e. Bachelor's degree as minimum for teaching in undergraduate courses, Master's degree as minimum for teaching in postgraduate courses

iii. The institution does not articulate the minimum skills or qualifications required by sessional staff. The recruitment process does not consider qualifications of sessional staff. Sessional staff articulation of employment and educational skills proceeds on an ad-hoc, informal basis and is variable or inconsistent across the institution.

iv. Not applicable

4. Once you have created a new account and/ or logged in, you will see this box.

Each BBIT page consists of:

- One of three Key Principles
- Criteria
- Set of standard statements

My Profile Logout

## Principle Two: Support for sessional staff

As an institution, the University is committed to achieving quality management standards in recruitment, employment, administration and academic support, in order to ensure consistent and appropriate support for sessional staff.

The University also recognises that sessional staff require basic infrastructure and provisions in order to undertake their roles effectively and professionally.

### Consider these criteria relating to Principle Two

**1. Institution has a funding model that allocates resources for sessional staff professional development**

Please click in the box below to select the set of statements which best applies to your Institution:

i. Professional development of sessional staff is adequately resourced through the funding model on an ongoing basis

ii. Funding and/or resourcing is available for the professional development of all sessional staff.

iii. No targeted resourcing for the professional development of sessional staff. Resources and/or funding are inadequate for development of sessional staff. Funding and/or resourcing is uncertain or not sustained.

iv. Not applicable

Under each Principle there are criteria for that organisational level.

For each individual criterion there are a range of standards ranging from good practice to unsustainable.



5. Select the statement which **best matches your current context** as you see it. You need to enter something in the box unless you have selected *non-applicable*.

**Please explain your selection**

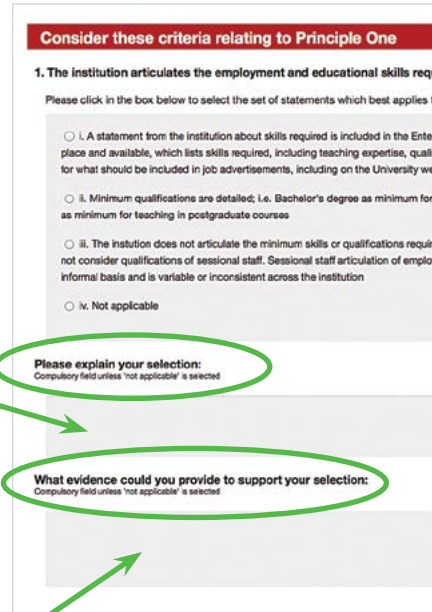
In this box you are asked to enter why you have chosen this particular set of statements as *most applicable* to your context.

You may be as detailed or as brief as you wish.

**Note:** Here is where you may also enter how well the statement set fits or doesn't fit your institutional context.



This text will appear in the Summary Report.



**What evidence could you use to support this explanation?**

In this box you are asked to enter what evidence you could use to support the explanation you have given in the box above.

*Some examples of evidence: Learning and teaching committee meeting minutes, student support policy documents, workshop attendance sheets, pay slips, employment contracts, professional development programs, staff survey results, cross-institutional surveys.*

**Note:** You cannot upload evidence to BBIT.



This text will appear in the Summary Report.

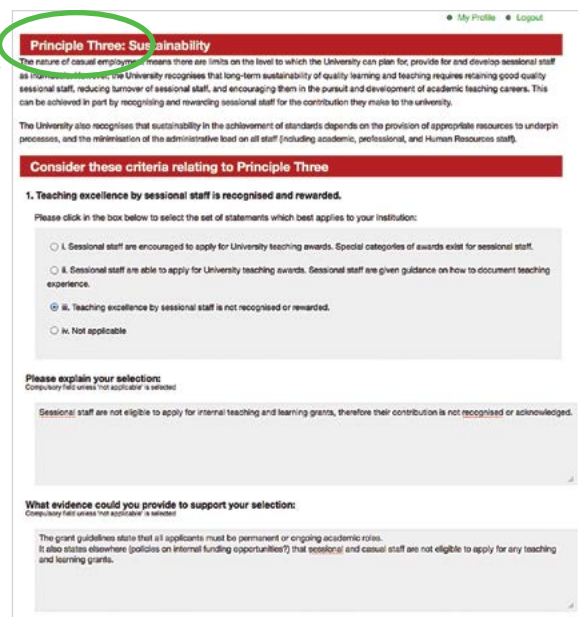
6. At the bottom of each page, you need to **Save** to move on or **Save and go back** to the **Previous** page.

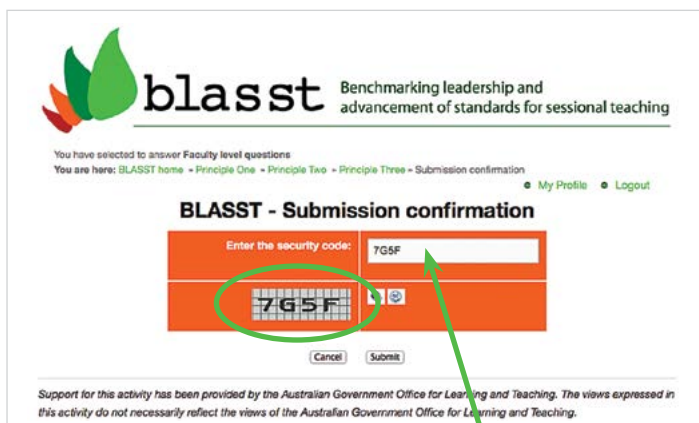
**Save & Previous step**

7. Repeat for criteria relating to Principle 2 and Principle 3.

8. At the bottom of **Principle Three** page, click on **Save & Get Report**.

**Save & Get report**





9. Before obtaining the summary report you will need to prove you're human by entering the security code.

A Summary Report is automatically generated at the end of the benchmarking process for saving to file as a PDF or for printing.



### The BLASST Benchmarking Summary Report includes:

- The organisational level
- Date completed
- Key Principles
- Criteria
- Standard and current level of practice (colour-coded)
- Your explanation for the standard selected
- Notes on the evidence that can be used to support this explanation

## The BLASST Summary Report and Action Plan

The BLASST Summary Report presents your results using a traffic light colour coded scheme. Green represents achieving good practice against a criterion, orange indicates an attainment of a minimum standard and red indicates unsustainable practice.

### Good practice

refers to practices that systematically enhance quality learning and teaching and retain and support Sessional Staff.

### Minimum standards

refers to practice that meets the minimum need for sustainable practice.

### Unsustainable

refers to practice that cannot be sustained in the long-term.

Benchmarking Report - Faculty level		
Faculty:	busyness	
Institution:	busiest	
Completed by:	Blasst project	
Email:	blasstproject@gmail.com	
Date:	14/06/2013	
<b>Principle One: Quality Learning and Teaching</b>		
<b>Criterion 1. Sessional staff are provided with an induction to learning and teaching</b>		
<b>Your Faculty's current level of practice:</b>	<b>Minimum Standard</b>	<i>Minimum Standard: There has been an active attempt to address the criteria; refers to practices that meet the minimum needed for sustainable practice</i>
<b>Standard:</b>	ii. Induction is provided and includes the basics of learning and teaching, and use of IT tools such as Moodle or Blackboard. Resources for induction are provided to all sessional staff.	

### *Reflect on your summary report.*

The report can be used to inform and guide the ongoing development of good practice. You can use this report in many ways: for self-reflection; as a basis for discussion with colleagues or a mentor across the department or faculty, or as part of an institutional leadership project.

### *Your summary report is a confidential document.*

An individual using the B-BIT retains

the right to keep the report confidential and the option to share with others, for example, with their colleagues, supervisor, department or faculty. Likewise, departments, faculties and institutions have the right to keep their reports confidential.

## Developing an Action Plan

### *Develop a series of actions resulting from this reflective and benchmarking exercise.*

The summary report has a blank field for each criterion. Write your strategies for your action plan here.

Criteria coded as green identify strengths and good practice and you may note that "we will work towards maintaining this standard by... [insert your action plan strategy]". Good practice can be shared with colleagues and the sector. Criteria coded as minimum or unsustainable needs to be addressed with action plan strategies that will develop current practice into good practice. A strategy for achieving this should be included in your action plan.

### *Action cycles*

Working towards enhancing quality is best undertaken as part of a regular quality cycle. It is recommended that you engage with the Framework on a regular basis. This enables you to monitor your outcomes and change over time.